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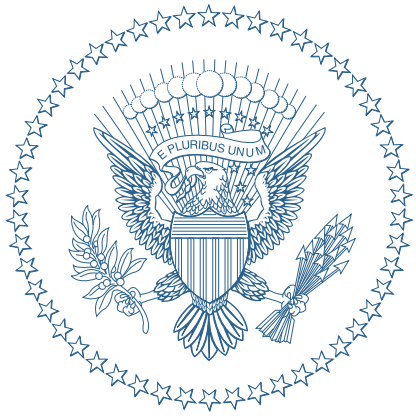
OF THE
UNITED STATES

Barack Obama



2015

(IN TWO BOOKS)

BOOK II—JULY 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 2015

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Foreword

The second half of 2015 was a time of real progress in the lives of our citizens. The end of the year marked the strongest 2 years of private-sector job creation since the end of the last century—an achievement reflected in the unemployment rate, which held steady at 5 percent, and in what continued to be the longest streak of job growth on record. For the first time ever, more than 9 in 10 Americans had health insurance, including more than 17 million who had gained coverage thanks to the Affordable Care Act. And here at home and around the world, we led the effort to ensure a fairer, cleaner, and safer world for our children. As we prepared to turn the page on yet another chapter of extraordinary change, I looked toward the final full year of my Presidency feeling more hopeful than ever about America's promise.

In early November, I signed a bipartisan budget agreement that reflects our values, grows our economy, creates jobs, and keeps our people safe. The following month, I signed a tax and budget agreement that permanently extended important tax credits for working families, supported small businesses and companies investing in innovation, and made a landmark investment in clean energy. In December, I also signed a bipartisan education bill, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)—that will help ensure every student is prepared to succeed in the 21st-century economy. Designed to replace a law that too often fell short in considering the needs of communities, ESSA establishes a new Federal-State partnership to focus on our national goal of ensuring all students graduate prepared for college and future careers, reduces unnecessary standardized tests, lays the foundation to expand access to high-quality preschools, and reaffirms our belief in the idea that education is a civil right that should be available to all our children—no matter their race or income or station in life.

During the summer, I became the first sitting President to visit a Federal prison—El Reno Federal Penitentiary in Oklahoma. My goal was to get a firsthand look at the challenges and opportunities we face in our criminal justice system. I met with six inmates in custody for drug offenses. Their stories deepened my own understanding about how we can make our criminal justice system fairer, smarter, and more effective, and make sure those who have paid their debt to society can earn a second chance. State legislatures across America are working more urgently on these issues, and my own Administration also drove progress in this area. We took steps toward "banning the box" for competitive service jobs at Federal agencies, announcing an intent to remove the question about having criminal records from job applications so that those who may have made a mistake have a chance to serve their fellow citizens. We also began a review of the overuse of solitary confinement in U.S. prisons. And because reform requires our addressing the long history of inequity in our country's criminal justice system, we continued to bring attention to the fact that, for too long, boys and young men of color have experienced being treated differently under the law. Justice means making sure every child knows that they are special and important and that their lives matter.

While we worked to improve life for our citizens here at home, we also joined with our partners around the world to expand prosperity and possibility. In the fall, 12 nations came together to advance the Trans-Pacific Partnership—a trade deal that would reflect our country's values, preserve our environment, set high standards for protecting workers, and enable America to rewrite the rules of global trade. The members of the agreement represent nearly 40 percent of the world's GDP, and the deal would help America's businesses sell our own goods and services around the world and help more American workers compete and win. As we sought to extend our reach in the Asia-Pacific, we also explored new frontiers, strengthening our commitment to discovery that has always fueled our Nation's progress. At the height of summer, NASA's New Horizons Spacecraft achieved a milestone on its nearly decade-long journey: it reached Pluto—a previously unchartered area of space—and sent high-resolution pictures of the icy mass back to us here on earth.

We also suffered extraordinary loss. Throughout the second half of the year our country experienced shootings at a military recruiting center in Chattanooga, a community college in Oregon, and a Planned Parenthood center in Colorado. Abroad, our oldest ally, France, again experienced an

outrageous attempt to terrorize its citizens—brutal attacks that killed over 100 people. Paris's resolve was a testament to the values that will endure far beyond the hateful vision of the perpetrators of evil. Weeks later, America, experienced an attack on our own homeland, when two radicalized individuals shot 14 Americans in San Bernardino, California. This incident, yet another in the heartbreaking series of shootings that have plagued our Nation for far too long, demanded that we reflect on our own society and recommit ourselves to do all we can to keep our people safe.

The United States continued to lead the global coalition in our mission to defeat the terrorist group ISIL, hitting them harder than ever. And as the Syrian civil war continued to force families from their homes and seek refuge across the world, the United States increased the number of refugees we welcomed within our borders, because in the faces of suffering families, our nation of immigrants sees ourselves.

Extraordinary successes abroad helped pave the way for a more peaceful and sustainable future for generations to come. After 2 years of negotiations, we, along with our international partners, achieved a comprehensive, long-term deal with Iran that will prevent it from obtaining a nuclear weapon. This deal was an exemplary demonstration of the power diplomacy has to bring about real and meaningful change, cutting off every pathway for Iran to secure a nuclear weapon and stopping the spread of nuclear weapons in the region. To build on the progress we had made toward normalizing our relationship with Cuba, I announced that the United States would formally reestablish diplomatic relations—a historic step marked by the reopening of our embassy there and the Stars and Stripes flying over Havana for the first time in more than 50 years. And in December, leaders from nearly 200 nations came together in Paris to reach an agreement that reduces global carbon pollution and sets the world on a course to a low-carbon future. The Paris Agreement reaffirms the truth that with American commitment and leadership and collective action from the international community, we can solve the problem of climate change.

Reflecting on the year behind us, it was clear we had many reasons to feel optimistic about the direction our country was headed. As we enter 2016, I am ready to make use of every remaining minute of my Presidency, and I remain confident that the year ahead will hold continued, meaningful progress.

Preface

This book contains the papers and speeches of the President of the United States that were issued by the Office of the Press Secretary during the period July 1–December 31, 2015. The material has been compiled and published by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration.

The material is presented in chronological order, and the dates shown in the headings are the dates of the documents or events. In instances when the release date differs from the date of the document itself, that fact is shown in the textnote. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy: Remarks are checked against an audio recording, and signed documents are checked against the original. Textnotes and cross references have been provided by the editors for purposes of identification or clarity. Speeches were delivered in Washington, DC, unless otherwise indicated. The times noted are local times. All materials that are printed in full text in the book have been indexed in the subject and name indexes and listed in the document categories list.

The Public Papers of the Presidents series was begun in 1957 in response to a recommendation of the National Historical Publications Commission. An extensive compilation of messages and papers of the Presidents covering the period 1789 to 1897 was assembled by James D. Richardson and published under congressional authority between 1896 and 1899. Since then, various private compilations have been issued, but there was no uniform publication comparable to the Congressional Record or the United States Supreme Court Reports. Many Presidential papers could be found only in the form of mimeographed White House releases or as reported in the press. The Commission therefore recommended the establishment of an official series in which Presidential writings, addresses, and remarks of a public nature could be made available.

The Commission's recommendation was incorporated in regulations of the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register, issued under section 6 of the Federal Register Act (44 U.S.C. 1506), which may be found in title 1, part 10, of the Code of Federal Regulations.

A companion publication to the Public Papers series, the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, was begun in 1965 to provide a broader range of Presidential materials on a more timely basis to meet the needs of the contemporary reader. Beginning with the administration of Jimmy Carter, the Public Papers series expanded its coverage to include additional material as printed in the Weekly Compilation. On January 20, 2009, the printed Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents was superseded by the online Daily Compilation of Presidential Documents. The Daily Compilation provides a listing of the President's daily schedule and meetings, when announced, and other items of general interest issued by the Office of the Press Secretary.

Also included in the printed edition are lists of the President's nominations submitted to the Senate, materials released by the Office of the Press Secretary that are not printed in full text in the book, and proclamations, Executive orders, and other Presidential documents released by the Office of the Press Secretary and published in the *Federal Register*. This information appears in the appendixes at the end of the book.

Volumes covering the administrations of Presidents Herbert Hoover, Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald R. Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, William J. Clinton, and George W. Bush are also included in the Public Papers series.

The Public Papers of the Presidents publication program is under the direction of John Hyrum Martinez, Director of the Publications and Services Division, Office of the Federal

Register. The series is produced by the Presidential and Legislative Publications Unit, Kimberly Tilliman, Supervisor. The Chief Editor of this book was Joseph K. Vetter; the Managing Editor was Joshua H. Liberatore, assisted by Amelia E. Otovo.

The frontispiece and photographs used in the portfolio were supplied by the White House Photo Office. The typography and design of the book were developed by the Government Publishing Office under the direction of Hugh N. Halpern, Director.

Oliver A. Potts
Director of the Federal Register

David S. Ferriero
Archivist of the United States

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Secretary of the Interior	Sarah M.R. "Sally" Jewell
Secretary of Agriculture	Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary of Commerce	Penny S. Pritzker
Secretary of Labor	Thomas E. Perez
Secretary of Health and Human Services	Sylvia Mathews Burwell
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Secretary of Education	Arne Duncan
Secretary of Veterans Affairs	Robert A. McDonald
Secretary of Homeland Security	Jeh C. Johnson
Chief of Staff	Denis R. McDonough
Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency	Regina McCarthy
United States Trade Representative	Michael B. Froman
Director of the Office of Management and Budget	Shaun L.S. Donovan
Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers	Jason L. Furman

United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations	Samantha Power
Administrator of the Small Business Administration	Maria Contreras-Sweet

Administration of Barack Obama

2015

Remarks on the Reestablishment of Diplomatic Relations and Permanent Diplomatic Missions by the United States and Cuba
July 1, 2015

Good morning, everybody. Please have a seat.

More than 54 years ago, at the height of the cold war, the United States closed its Embassy in Havana. Today I can announce that the United States has agreed to formally reestablish diplomatic relations with the Republic of Cuba and reopen Embassies in our respective countries. This is a historic step forward in our efforts to normalize relations with the Cuban Government and people and begin a new chapter with our neighbors in the Americas.

When the United States shuttered our Embassy in 1961, I don't think anyone expected that it would be more than half a century before it reopened. After all, our nations are separated by only 90 miles, and there are deep bonds of family and friendship between our people. But there have been very real, profound differences between our Governments, and sometimes, we allow ourselves to be trapped by a certain way of doing things.

For the United States, that meant clinging to a policy that was not working. Instead of supporting democracy and opportunity for the Cuban people, our efforts to isolate Cuba, despite good intentions, increasingly had the opposite effect: cementing the status quo and isolating the United States from our neighbors in this hemisphere. The progress that we mark today is yet another demonstration that we don't have to be imprisoned by the past. When something isn't working, we can and will change.

Last December, I announced that the United States and Cuba had decided to take steps to normalize our relationship. As part of that effort, President Raúl Castro and I directed our teams to negotiate the reestablishment of Embassies. Since then, our State Department has worked hard with their Cuban counterparts to achieve that goal. And later this summer, Secretary Kerry will travel to Havana formally to proudly raise the American flag over our Embassy once more.

This is not merely symbolic. With this change, we will be able to substantially increase our contacts with the Cuban people. We'll have more personnel at our Embassy, and our diplomats will have the ability to engage more broadly across the island. That will include the Cuban Government, civil society, and ordinary Cubans who are reaching for a better life.

On issues of common interest, like counterterrorism, disaster response, and development, we will find new ways to cooperate with Cuba. And I've been clear that we will also continue to have some very serious differences. That will include America's enduring support for universal values like freedom of speech and assembly and the ability to access information. And we will not hesitate to speak out when we see actions that contradict those values.

However, I strongly believe that the best way for America to support our values is through engagement. That's why we've already taken steps to allow for greater travel, people-to-people, and commercial ties between the United States and Cuba. And we will continue to do so going forward.

Since December, we've already seen enormous enthusiasm for this new approach. Leaders across the Americas have expressed support for our change in policy; you heard that expressed by President Dilma Rousseff of Brazil yesterday. Public opinion surveys in both our countries show broad support for this engagement. One Cuban said, "I have prepared for this all my life." Another said that "this is like a shot of oxygen." One Cuban teacher put it simply: "We are neighbors. Now we can be friends."

Here in the United States, we've seen that same enthusiasm. There are Americans who want to travel to Cuba and American

businesses who want to invest in Cuba, American colleges and universities that want to partner with Cuba. Above all, Americans want to get to know their neighbors to the south. And through that engagement, we can also help the Cuban people improve their own lives. One Cuban American looked forward to "reuniting families and opening lines of communications." Another put it bluntly: "You can't hold the future of Cuba hostage to what happened in the past."

And that's what this is about: a choice between the future and the past.

Americans and Cubans alike are ready to move forward. I believe it's time for Congress to do the same. And I've called on Congress to take steps to lift the embargo that prevents Americans from traveling or doing business in Cuba. We've already seen Members from both parties begin that work. After all, why should Washington stand in the way of our own people?

Yes, there are those who want to turn back the clock and double down on a policy of isolation. But it's long past time for us to realize that this approach doesn't work. It hasn't worked for 50 years. It shuts America out of Cuba's future, and it only makes life worse for the Cuban people.

So I'd ask Congress to listen to the Cuban people. Listen to the American people. Listen to the words of a proud Cuban American, Carlos Gutierrez, who recently came out against the policy of the past, saying, "I wonder if the Cubans who have to stand in line for the most basic necessities for hours in the hot Havana sun feel that this approach is helpful to them."

Of course, nobody expects Cuba to be transformed overnight. But I believe that American engagement—through our Embassy, our businesses, and most of all, through our people—is the best way to advance our interests and support for democracy and human rights. Time and again, America has demonstrated that part of our leadership in the world is our capacity to change. It's what inspires the world to reach for something better.

A year ago, it might have seemed impossible that the United States would once again be raising our flag, the Stars and Stripes, over an Embassy in Havana. This is what change looks like.

In January of 1961, the year I was born, when President Eisenhower announced the termination of our relations with Cuba, he said: It is my hope and my conviction that it is "in the not-too-distant future it will be possible for the historic friendship between us once again to find its reflection in normal relations of every sort." Well, it took a while, but I believe that time has come. And a better future lies ahead.

Thank you very much. And I want to thank some of my team who worked diligently to make this happen. They're here. They don't always get acknowledged. We're really proud of them. Good work.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:08 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Havana, Cuba, residents Julia Niurka Mesa Galbán, Carlos Gonzalez, and Frank Reyes; Aventura, FL, resident Mimi Davila; Miami, FL, resident Jorge Collazo; and former Secretary of Commerce Carlos M. Gutierrez.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at a Town Hall Meeting on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act at Taylor Stratton Elementary School in Nashville, Tennessee

July 1, 2015

The President. Hello, everybody! Everybody, have a seat. Have a seat. Well, it's good to be back in Nashville. I like Nashville. I don't know if you noticed, I come back here quite a bit. [*Laughter*]

First of all, can everybody please give Kelly a big round of applause? The—in addition to being wonderful and somewhat feisty spirit, as I have learned, she also has the distinction of possibly being the first person ever to be picked up at her house by a Presidential motorcade. [*Laughter*] Which I thought was pretty cool. Well, it turned out it was so close to the school, so we said, well, we might as well just swing by and get her. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank the school for hosting us here today, because I know it's a lot of work when we come into town. Very much appreciate everybody who was involved in that. You have a great mayor, Karl Dean, who's here, so please give Karl a big round of applause. There he is with his beautiful family right there. Family, stand up. Family, come on. There's his family there. [*Applause*] Yay! You can't imagine what a family has to put up with when you're in public service. So we really appreciate all of them.

Kelly already mentioned him, but he is somebody who is what you want out of a Member of Congress. He works hard. He calls it like he sees them. He's willing to do courageous stuff even when it's not popular. He is a gentleman, one of my favorite people, Jim Cooper. So—[*applause*].

Also here is somebody who knows health care well, was a health care professional, a doctor and executive, and knows a little bit about politics because he used to be the former majority leader. When I first came in, in fact, he and I had a chance to work together on a number of things, and he's been a terrific advocate on behalf of health care for a lot of people—Mr. Bill Frist.

So, with that, I think I'm going to take off my jacket—[*laughter*]—get a little more relaxed here. Part of the reason we came to Tennessee, in addition to me just liking Nashville and liking the State, generally—thank you, Alan—is that Tennessee has a history of innovation when it comes to health care, doing some very creative stuff—health care professionals, doctors, nurses, hospitals and executives working alongside nonprofits and the public sector to make sure that people are getting the very best health care they can and also being able to control costs in a sensible way.

And thanks to the Affordable Care Act and the efforts of people like Jim who took some very tough votes, we now have about 166,000 Tennesseans who have health care who didn't have it before, folks like Kelly.

In addition to the people who are able to buy health insurance through the exchanges, through the marketplaces that were set up through the Affordable Care Act, I think it's important to remember that everybody who has health insurance benefited and continues to benefit from this law, even though a lot of folks don't know it.

So, if you have health insurance through the job, you're able to keep your child on health insurance up until they're 26 years old because of this law. And that's provided millions of young people across the country with health insurance who may not have had it before. And that's especially important as young people are transitioning, getting their first job. They may not always get a job that has full benefits, and this way, they're able to make sure that they stay healthy.

In addition, if you're a senior citizen or somebody who's disabled, it turns out that you are getting discounts on your prescription drugs that you may not have noticed, but are saving you potentially hundreds or even thousands of dollars. And there are millions of people across the country who are benefiting. That is because of this law.

If you don't fall into those categories and you're just somebody who's got health insurance on the job, you now are protected, so that if you, let's say, lost that job or decided to move to a job or just start your own business, you can't be prohibited from getting health insurance because of a preexisting condition. That's a protection that everybody is benefiting from as a consequence of this law.

If you're a woman, you can't be charged just for being a woman as a consequence of this law. Last I checked, that's about over half of the population—[*laughter*]—so that's a pretty large constituency. You're able to get free

preventive care, including mammograms, as a consequence of this law, on your insurance.

So there are a whole host of things that fall under the Affordable Care Act that are benefiting 100 million, 150 million people. They just may not be aware of it. But what it's done is, it's made health care stronger, more secure, and more reliable in America. And you don't always notice that until you need it, the way Kelly needed it. And that peace of mind, that understanding that if you get sick, you're not going to lose your job—or you're not going to lose your house, you're not going to lose all your savings, that you're going to be able to get quality care—that is extraordinarily important.

I've said before, the scariest day of my life was when Sasha was 3 years old—3 months old—my daughter—and she got meningitis. And the only reason we knew was because we had a great primary care physician and we were able to rush to an emergency room. And the doctors and nurses did extraordinary work. And I was feeling helpless in that situation, but I thought, what would happen if I was in the same situation and I didn't have health care, and I didn't have a primary care physician to call in the middle of the night because we noticed that she wasn't crying the same way she usually cried? Because of the law we've passed, there are parents who just aren't going to have to face that. And that's priceless.

Now, the good news is that, contrary to some of the expectations, not only has the law worked better than we expected, not only are 16 million people now getting health insurance that didn't have it before, not only do we now have the lowest uninsured rate since we started tracking people and how much health insurance they had, but it's actually ended up costing less than people expected. And health care costs have been held—the inflation on health care costs have actually proved to be the lowest—since the Affordable Care Act passed—in the last 50 years. So we're actually seeing less health care inflation.

And part of the reason is because the law also encouraged health care providers and doctors, nurses, hospitals to start thinking more creatively about, how can we get a better bang for our health care dollar? How can we make sure that rather than spending a lot of money on unnecessary tests or readmissions, we're encouraging really high-quality care that's good for the patient, but also good for health care spending?

And this is another area where Tennessee actually has been really innovative. In fact, it won a $65 million grant for State innovation, where you've got hospitals and doctors and nurses and non-for-profits and other groups working together to figure out how can we, for example, identify potential diabetes patients early, make sure that they're getting healthy quicker, preventing some of the worst elements of it. And even though it might involve a little extra spending on the front end, it turns out, it saves hundreds of thousands of dollars on the back end; improves quality of life, improves quality of care, cuts costs, which is good for our economy, good for patients, and good for America.

So I'm feeling pretty good about how health care is going. And the thing I've never lost sight of, though, is that this is about people. This is not about politics, it's not about Washington. It's about families and loved ones and the struggle and the fear that comes about when you have a serious illness and knowing that you've got not just your own family, but also a community that has your back.

And you heard Kelly talk about her story. Sitting right next to Kelly is a wonderful woman named Natoma Canfield, who came down with me today. She's from Ohio, and she wrote a letter to me, pretty similar to Kelly's, back in—5 years ago, so back in 2010, when we were still in the middle of this fight to try to get health care that's affordable for everybody. And Natoma had been diagnosed with cancer, had beat it back, then was buying health insurance on the individual market, and it turned out that the costs were just skyrocketing so high that she just couldn't afford it anymore.

And she wrote to me a passionate letter about why we needed to get this done. And I would always refer back to her letter whenever things got a little bleak and Congress wasn't behaving as sensibly as Jim Cooper behaves.

[*Laughter*] And when we finally signed that bill, I had Natoma's letter framed with the pen that I signed the bill with—one of the pen's that I signed the bill with—just to remind me that this wasn't about politics, this was about people.

And so I'm so glad Natoma is here, but I'm also glad that all of you are here. And part of what I'm hoping is that with the Supreme Court case now behind us, what we can do is—[*applause*]—I'm hoping that what we can do is now focus on how we can make it even better. Because it's not as if we've solved all the problems in our health care system. America still spends more on health care than any other advanced nation, and our outcomes aren't particularly better.

And so we know there's still a lot of waste in the system. We know that the quality of care isn't always where it needs to be. And so my hope is, is that on a bipartisan basis, in places like Tennessee, but all across the country, we can now focus on what we—what have we learned. What's working? What's not working? Are there further improvements we can make to improve quality? Are there more ways we can encourage people to get preventive care so that they don't get sick in the first place, so that we have a actual health care system instead of a disease care system? Are there ways that we can do better to provide the support we need for outstanding primary care physicians and nurses, who oftentimes are coming out of school loaded up with debt and aren't always getting the support that they need and aren't always able to practice the way they want to practice?

There are huge areas of improvement, and frankly, there are still a lot of people who aren't insured. Part of the design of the Affordable Care Act was that some people were going to buy health care on the marketplace; in some cases, we were going to allow States to expand their coverage through individualized programs in their States. I think because of politics, not all States have taken advantage of the options that are out there. Our hope is, is that more of them do.

We still have to sign a bunch of people up. We've covered now about a third of the people who weren't covered before this law passed, but that means there's still two-thirds out there who still need some help and they're still going to the emergency room at the last minute when something goes wrong.

And so we want to educate people. We want to listen to folks. We want to hear good ideas from all sources. We want to think about this in a practical, American way instead of a partisan, political way. And if we do that, then I think there's still great strides to be made.

So I want to thank all of you for being here. And with that, I'm just going to open it up for a bunch of questions. And you can ask me about anything, but probably, you should ask me a couple of questions about health care. [*Laughter*] I'm also willing to talk about the women's soccer team and how we're going to beat whoever it is we're playing up in Canada. I can talk about the NBA free agency. [*Laughter*] I can talk about the Predators and hockey. And I can talk about other things other than sports. [*Laughter*]

But the way we're going to do this is, we're just going to—this is very casual. I'm just going to call on folks. The only rules I'm going to lay down are when you raise your hand, if you can wait—are there microphones in the audience? So wait for a microphone so we can all hear you. And I'd like you to introduce yourself. And I'm going to try to make sure that we go boy, girl, boy, girl, so that it's even. [*Laughter*] Okay? All right.

We're going to start with this young lady right here in front. The—can we get a microphone right here? So remember to introduce yourself. Go ahead and hand her the mike. Sometimes we tell our folks to hang onto the mike because people——

Q. Keep them.

The President. ——keep it for too long. [*Laughter*] But this looks like a pretty well-behaved group, so go ahead and hand them the mike.

Q. I am Jackie Shrago, I am a Tennessee volunteer enrolling people in the Affordable Care Act.

The President. Thank you.

Health Care Exchanges

Q. We live in a city with a lot of health care companies and a lot of great medical facilities who can take advantage of some of the things you mentioned. What do you think ordinary people—people who are volunteers, or ordinary citizens—can do to help make our health care system and our health insurance system better?

The President. Well, first of all, I want to thank you for volunteering, because so much of our challenge these first couple of years as we've gotten this started was just getting people information, because there was so much misinformation out there.

So, for example, a lot of people don't know that through the exchange, through the Affordable Care Act exchange plan, there is enormous choice of plans. And Tennessee actually has benefited from some of the widest range of choices of just about any State. I think there are 70 options to choose from for people throughout the State. And about 80 percent of people who are purchasing health insurance through these exchanges because they're getting Federal subsidies, they're spending less than a hundred bucks a month for good, quality care. And that's true nationwide.

So part of our goal here is just to give people good information. And in fairness to folks, look, before I started tackling this whole health care thing, when I got a job, I didn't really pay attention to health care benefits. You go to the job, and somebody from HR hands you a form and says, here, fill this out, and they tell you, well, you need to choose from two or three plans, and you, kind of, ask them, all right, well, what do you think? [*Laughter*] They tell you, well, that one is pretty good, and you sign up for it. Most of us don't spend a lot of time thinking about health insurance until we get sick, unfortunately.

So getting people information, I think that's something that is really helpful when it comes from neighbors, friends, coworkers, your church, because you have more trust. Sometimes, people don't always trust what they see on television, especially on something that became sort of a political football.

I think the other thing is for citizens to share their stories of how it's helped them not only with their friends, neighbors, coworkers, but also with their State legislators and with their Governor, and writing letters and letting them know that this is helping people, it makes a difference, so that they then recognize that this is an important need and it's worthy of support.

And then, you've also got to take care of yourself. But you look really good, so you're obviously—[*laughter*]—getting exercise and eating right and getting regular checkups and all that good stuff. Because that's helpful as well. That's part of how we keep costs down, is making sure people are well informed about what it takes to live a healthy life.

So, great question though. Good.

All right, it's a gentleman's turn. This guy right down here. You've got a good-looking beard. All right, hold on a second. Let's get the mike. Like I said, you can just pass it down to him.

State Health Care Reform Efforts

Q. It is an honor and a privilege to be here, Mr. President. My name is Kenneth Wilburn. I live in Pikeville, Tennessee. It's about 50 miles north of Chattanooga. And I'm here representing the 280,000 people that is uninsurable in the State of Tennessee with the Insure for—the Insure Tennessee Act. And what we need is—we've got no insurance. We can't get no insurance. We don't make enough to pay for insurance, but still yet we make too much to get a subsidy insurance. And I would like to know if you are aware of this, or is there anything that—movements or acts that you can make on the part of our problem here?

The President. Well, first of all, I appreciate your comments. There is something that can be done, but it's going to be at the State level. And I think that it's important for State legislators to get together and find a uniquely Tennessee solution to the problem.

But understand, the way the law was set up was that States would have the option of expanding existing programs like Medicaid, and

then, you'd also have people who were buying health insurance on the marketplace and getting subsidies. And the point you're making is that if the State hasn't taken action on one part of the program, then even with the good work that's being done for people who are getting subsidies and purchasing insurance, you're still leaving a bunch of folks out. And here in Tennessee, that's probably a couple hundred thousand people who could benefit if we really focused on how to fix it.

Now, as I said before, Tennessee has a history of bipartisan, smart, State-specific efforts to expand health insurance. And I don't expect that what's good for Tennessee is automatically going to be the same as what's good for California or what's good for my home State of Illinois. But given the strong history of innovation in health care in Tennessee and given the high quality of doctors and hospitals and nurses and networks that are here, you all should be able to find a solution. And the Federal Government is there to help and to work with those States that are ready to get going.

I will tell you, the States that have taken full advantage of all the Federal options available, they have an even lower uninsured rate and a healthier population and more people signing up for the options that are available than those States that have not taken full advantage of those options. And that's just a fact. And it is unfortunate that getting this done got so political. Washington is kind of a crazy place. But that doesn't mean every place has got to be crazy. [*Laughter*] So I'd like to see some good sense spring forth from the great State of Tennessee, see if we can get this thing done.

All right. All right. Yes, right there. Go ahead.

Health Care Cost Control Efforts

Q. Thank you so much for being here today and sharing with us. I'm Karen Springer from St. Thomas Health and one of the administrators. So the work that's already been done, the exchange, we know we have work to do with expansion. What would you envision are the next steps that we need to take in health care in general for our country?

The President. The areas where I think we can still make the biggest difference, in addition to making sure everybody is signed up for the options that they have, is to really think more about the delivery system of health care. And this can get real complicated because we've got a complicated health care system. But I can boil it down maybe into layman's terms.

Right now we spend too much money on the wrong things and not enough money on the right things. So health care generally is very expensive in this country. But if you look at how that money is spent, we don't give enough incentives to health care providers to really focus just on the patient and the quality of care. First of all, there's way too much bureaucracy. There's way too much paperwork. That wears out the patient. It wears out the doctor. It wears out the nurses. They don't like it.

The second problem is that because of the way that we've designed the payment system in health care, historically what happened was that, let's say, a hospital or a doctor had a patient come in, says, I've got diabetes, or I have, I think maybe, diabetes. The hospital or the doctor would get paid to amputate the leg of a patient, but they wouldn't get reimbursed if they just hired somebody to monitor whether that individual was taking their medicines on a regular basis and monitoring their eating habits, right? So what ends up happening is, is that you don't end up helping the patient who might have kept their leg if they were keeping up a regular regimen of looking after themselves.

The doctors don't feel good about that. The nurses don't feel good about it. But they just don't have time because of the economics of the health care system. One of the things that we're trying to do across the board—and Tennessee is actually doing some good innovation on this—is, let's reimburse people for the outcomes and the quality of care that people are getting.

So, instead of—when that patient comes in, instead of worrying about just, okay, I'm going to bill for this test and I'm going to bill for this surgery, let's tell them, if that person ends up

having a good outcome, then you're going to get reimbursed. And the better the outcome, maybe the bigger the reimbursement.

And now it may turn out that it's a good deal for the doctor to spend an extra half an hour with the patient very carefully going over the medicine they should be getting. Or the hospital may say, you know what, we're going to sign you up for a health club and make sure that you're getting some regular exercise, or we're going to reimburse you for a smoking-cessation program, and suddenly, all that produces a better result.

But we've got to make sure that we've got a payment system that follows that logic of patient-centered care. And as I said before, we're already seeing that happening. Part of the reason that we've actually seen health care costs slow—the inflation of health care slow—is because folks are starting to get reimbursed in different ways and health care groups are starting to organize themselves to focus on the quality of care as opposed to the amount of care.

If we can do that, see, what that does is it—first of all, it frees up resources. It's not good for anybody when health care costs go up, because not only does the Federal Government have to pay more, the State of Tennessee has to pay more. That means there's less money left over for doctors, nurses, for health education. It means higher premiums for the patients. But it also means that if we're saving—if we just cut 2 percent or 3 percent on the cost of health care, that's hundreds of billions of dollars that we can now spend on something else. We can spend that on education. We can spend that on job training programs. We can spend that on fixing some potholes. And it can improve everybody's quality of life.

So that, I think, is the area that we're going to be spending a lot of focus and a lot time, in addition to making sure that people are able to sign up for the care that they need. Because I want to emphasize, there are still too many people out there who haven't signed up or can't sign up for the health care that's available to them. And if we can clear away some of the politics, that will help as well. All right.

Good. Gentleman, right here.

Veterans Health Administration/Women Veterans

Q. Good afternoon, Mr. President. My name is Eric Brown from Nashville, Tennessee. I work for the Children's Defense Fund and a small, local congregation here. My question is more for veterans when it comes to health care. I have a family member who's a veteran. She would like to have a female doctor. She's been rejected about two or three times. So I just wanted to hear more of your thoughts on that—how to help her to get the health care that she needs, but also have the safety that she needs for it as well.

The President. Okay. Well, as most of you know, the VA system is an entirely separate health care system from the private sector health care systems that most of us use.

Here's the basic principle: If somebody is wearing our—the uniform of the Armed Services of this country and sacrificing and putting themselves in harm's way to protect us, we've got to give them good health care when they come home. We've got to make sure that they get the very best.

Now, the good news is that the overwhelming majority of veterans are very satisfied with the health care they receive once they get into the system. The bad news is that because a lot of the processing and systems in the VA system are outdated, sometimes, it's taken a long time for folks to get into the system, to get an appointment, to make sure that they've got a doctor that they're comfortable with. There are areas where there are still shortages; for example, in mental health, with a lot of folks coming back with PTSD, there are not—haven't been, historically, enough mental health services provided for our veterans.

So my Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Bob McDonald, who is a former—who's a veteran himself, but also a former CEO of Procter & Gamble, so knows about big companies and big operations—he's really been doing a good job in revamping how the VA system is organized generally. It's going to take some time. It's still not where it needs to be.

With respect to your—was it your sister, in particular?

Q. Mother-in-law.

The President. Your mother-in-law, in particular. We'll get your name and your mother-in-law's name, and we'll find out what exactly the issue is. But generally speaking, we've actually made an investment in women's health care in the VA system, reflecting the fact that we now have extraordinary women who are serving in the Armed Services and the health care needs of women are not always going to be the same as the health care needs of men. And so we've actually been trying to boost the kinds of specialties and training that are needed to provide health care to women—our women veterans, and we've been expanding that.

And that's something I'm very proud of. We've made a significant inroad in that area. Okay? Tell her thanks for her service.

All right, it's a young lady's turn. Go ahead. I'll go here, and—don't worry, I think I'll be able to catch everybody. Go ahead. But she does have an Obama pin on, so I thought I'd—[*laughter*]—I figured I had to give her a little props for that.

State Health Care Reform Efforts/Health Care Exchanges

Q. Thank you. And thank you, Mr. President, for coming to Tennessee. And I'm a—my name is Brenda Gilmore. I'm a member of the Tennessee General Assembly in the House. And there are a number of members that are here, so I just wanted you to know that we support you. We believe that health care is the right thing for everybody and especially for Tennesseans.

And I wanted to ask you, with your background also being a State senator——

The President. State legislator.

Q. ——do you have some strategies that you could share with us—[*laughter*]—that we could encourage our Governor to stay on the journey and to continue to find solutions to present Insure Tennessee and to bring some of our colleagues over on the other side so that we can take the politics out of it and help them to understand how important this is to the quality of life for Tennesseans?

The President. Well, I don't presume to know as much as you do about Tennessee politics, so I will leave the expert advice to folks like Jim Cooper maybe.

But here's the one thing I do know, is that elected officials respond to public opinion. I think one of the challenges that we've had throughout this fight has been that there's been a lot of misinformation out there. And so, if you stopped the average Tennessean on the street and you asked them, do you support making sure that insurance companies can't bar you from getting health insurance because of a preexisting condition, 8 out of 10 of them would say, absolutely, I support that. The overwhelming majority of Republicans would support it just as much as Democrats did.

Now, if you asked them, did you know the Affordable Care Act is what is guaranteeing you don't get blocked from getting health insurance with a preexisting condition, you'd get an argument with at least half those folks—"No, that's not what it's doing." So part of it is just providing people good information. That's really important. And if ordinary folks feel it's important, then usually, elected officials start responding.

I think the other thing to emphasize, which I know you're already doing, is recognizing that not every State is the same and that the truth is, is that there are a lot of different ways that States are approaching this problem. And if everybody will just acknowledge that people should get health insurance, right? That they should be able to get affordable care when they need it, if that much is acknowledged, that base principle, then you can say to them, okay, here's our ideas for how to do it, what are your ideas? And people can come up with good ideas of their own.

I will say this. People tend to forget that the Affordable Care Act model, with health care exchanges and buying on the—in the marketplace and getting subsidies from the Federal Government—that was originally a model that was embraced by Republicans before I embraced it. It's the model that Mitt Romney

signed into law in Massachusetts. It's the model that conservative organizations like Heritage Foundation thought were a good idea.

So my hope is that maybe now we can return to a constructive conversation about, if folks have better ideas, you should accept them. My general rule is, I have no pride of authorship here. I just want to make sure Kelly has got health insurance, and I want to make sure that Natoma has got health insurance, and I want to make sure this gentleman gets health insurance. And if there's a better way of doing it, let me know.

But it turns out that it's hard. [*Laughter*] So you—it's got to be an idea that actually works. It can't be an idea that sounds good, but then doesn't work. That's the only danger. So, if somebody tells you that, well, we're going to prohibit insurance companies from barring you from getting health insurance if you've got a preexisting condition—which is popular—but we're going to allow people not to get health insurance if they don't feel like it, then the truth is, that doesn't work. And the reason it doesn't work is, if you think about it, if you knew that the insurance company couldn't prevent you from getting health insurance once you were sick, you wouldn't pay all those premiums until you got sick. [*Laughter*] And then you'd go to your health insurance company and say, there's a law, you've got to sell me health insurance. And you'd save a whole lot of money, but of course, the whole insurance system would collapse. It wouldn't work.

So there are just some basic things that—basic realities about the health care system that have to be taken into account. But I think you should be open to other ideas. Like I said, look, I didn't mind stealing ideas from Mitt Romney. [*Laughter*] The—but the bottom line is: What works? What works? And if Republican legislators have better ideas, they should present them. But they have to be realistic. They have to be meaningful.

So, okay. The gentleman right here in the glasses. Right here. Yes. There you go.

Immigration Reform

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I am Hassan Nagib. I work with Family and Children Service. I am versed in the health care system, and I help people, like, enroll in the marketplace. And I want to thank you so much in behalf of the many people I've been helping, especially those vulnerable immigrant people, to get, like, affordable health insurance. We really thank you very much.

Also, I just want to ask you if you have any plans to expand this Affordable Care Act for, like, more sick—those immigrant people, especially the people who don't have enough, like, documents in this country, but they still live and work here for a long time. Thank you.

The President. Well, we were very clear that the Affordable Care Act did not apply to people who are not here legally. And that's the law. So that's another example of—there's a lot of misinformation about this. The law says that if you are undocumented, if you're not here legally, you can't benefit from subsidies and the program that we've set up.

The real answer to your question is why don't we have immigration reform so that people who've been here a long time who are otherwise law-abiding citizens, who oftentimes have children who are U.S. citizens, who are contributing to the society and are willing to pay their dues, pay taxes, get a background check—why don't we give them a pathway so they can be legal? If we do that, if we reform the immigration system, which is all broken, then this problem that you just mentioned takes care of itself.

I mean, I—look, we should not be encouraging illegal immigration. What we should be doing is setting up a smart, legal immigration system that doesn't separate families, but does focus on making sure that people who are dangerous, people who are gang bangers or criminals—that we're deporting them as quickly as possible, that we're focusing our resources there; that we're focusing on a strong border. We've made improvements on all those fronts, but we could be doing even more if we had immigration reform.

And we almost got that done. We had a bipartisan bill come through the Senate that was very smart and was well crafted. It wasn't exactly what I wanted, but it was a good compromise among a lot of different ideas. The House of Representatives declined to call it to a vote, even though I think we had a majority of Members of the House of Representatives who would be willing to vote for it.

I've taken some administrative actions to try to improve the system. For example, us not deporting some young person who grew up here and been here since they were 3 or 4 or 5 years old, brought here by their parents, hasn't done anything wrong, are going to school with our kids, are friends with our kids, and suddenly—in some cases, they didn't even know that they weren't citizens—and then they're 18 years old, and suddenly, they can't get a college scholarship because it turns out they don't have the legal documents.

And I said, administratively, that's not who we are, to just send those kids back. In some cases, they've never been to the country that their parents are from, don't speak the language. What do you mean we're going to send them back? Some of them serving in our military.

So we've done a lot administratively. Ultimately, though, to really find a full solution to the problem, we're going to have to get congressional action. And I suspect this will be a topic of conversation during the upcoming Presidential campaign.

I should note by the way that Michelle is very happy that I cannot run. [*Laughter*] The—that is good for the health care of our family. [*Laughter*]

Yes, go ahead.

Health Insurance Premiums/Health Care Cost Control Efforts

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Marian Herz from Mount Juliet, Tennessee. And thanks to the ACA, I was able to retire and still get health insurance. My question is, what are your thoughts on how to now manage the premiums? I don't know if you're aware that BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee has announced a significant increase after the one that they gave from 2014 to 2015.

The President. Well, keep in mind that the Affordable Care Act was designed so that there's competition. And folks in Tennessee benefited over these last 2 years not only of a lot of healthy competition—more insurers came in offering plans than just about any other place; it was really impressive—but Tennessee's premiums were also substantially lower than a lot of other States and have been over the last couple of years. The insurance companies now have come in requesting higher premiums.

The good news for people of Tennessee is, this has to be reviewed and approved by the insurance commission. And if last year is a good example—last year there were a number of States where the insurance companies came in requesting significant spikes in premiums. And there were a lot stories in the newspaper, just like there are this year, about, oh, premiums are skyrocketing and this is going to be terrible and all that. When all the dust settled and the commissioners who were empowered to review these rates forced insurance companies to justify what they were seeking, what you discovered was, is that the rates actually didn't go up as much as people thought.

So I think the key for Tennessee is just making sure that the insurance commissioner does their job in not just passively reviewing the rates, but really asking, okay, what is it that you are looking for here? Why would you need very high premiums? And my expectation is, is that they'll come in significantly lower than what's being requested.

But I think that this emphasizes the need for us to not let our foot off the gas when it comes to the delivery system reforms that I talked about earlier. Because part of what's happening in terms of health care costs is that as technology changes and there are more cures for more diseases, people utilize them more. And if we aren't smart about how we spend our health care dollars, if we want everything right away even if it's not shown to be particularly effective, then that shoots up health care costs,

and ultimately, premiums are going to keep on going up.

So we've got to think more carefully about this. The best example of this, by the way, is prescription drugs. I mean, the biggest spike in health care costs is around prescription drugs. Now, some of this is just because drugs have gotten better and people are able to now deal with cholesterol or deal with other chronic problems through a drug regimen. And that's a good thing. We should be happy about that. But when you've got a situation where the brand-name drug costs 100 bucks a pill and the generic drug costs 10 bucks a pill and the generic has been shown to be just as effective as the brand name, it's good for all of us as consumers to make sure that we're generally using the generic drug when we can.

And a lot of times—sometimes, we're very insistent because we've seen some fancy ad on TV. People are running around looking happy. [*Laughter*] Until they read that thing about: "This may cause serious side effects." [*Laughter*] Diarrhea, migraines, well—[*laughter*]. I always laugh at those ads. [*Laughter*]

But a lot of times, because of the advertising, you'll have somebody come into their doctor and say, well, I want X because I saw a TV ad, and if the doctor says, well, actually Y works just as well, and it's a lot cheaper, a lot of times people's attitude is no, no, no, I want X. And if the system is set up where you're getting X, then that means your premiums are going to go up. If you want your premiums to stay low, then you've got to base your decisions on your doctor—you want your doctors and your nurses basing decisions on science and what's proven as opposed to what's being advertised.

And that's just one example of how we've got to make sure that we continue to save money in the system. Because if we—if costs keep on going up and everybody wants everything and is not smart about how we're spending out health care dollars, then, yes, premiums are going to end up going up too high. But stay on your insurance commissioner, pay attention to what they're doing.

Okay. I've got time for one more, but I'm going to take two. [*Laughter*] Yes, sir, this gentlemen right here.

Q. These tables are not even. [*Laughter*] I'm Walter Davis, and I'm a director of the Tennessee Health Care Campaign, which does both enrollment and advocating for Governor Haslam's Insure Tennessee. It's wonderful to hear the success stories here. But here in the South, we need help from the Government and from supportive institutions to talk about the people being left behind. And I want to make sure you meet Davy Crockett before you leave today.

The President. This is Davy right here?

Q. Right there.

The President. Okay.

Q. Over there with the Tennessee Justice Center. There are important stories about the people who are left out because of a decision by legislators. And we love the legislators that are with us, both parties, but the other legislators need to meet people in the gap.

The President. Okay. Well, you know what, I think this is like a handoff to Davy here. [*Laughter*] So the—we'll get you the mike here, Dave. Hold on one second. Is your name really Davy Crockett?

Q. Yes.

The President. That's a cool name. [*Laughter*] But you don't have that beaver cap. [*Laughter*]

Q. I've got one at the house.

The President. You do? [*Laughter*]

Q. Yes.

The President. Okay. All right.

Social Security

Q. My name is James Davy Crockett. And I live in Bulls Gap, Tennessee. And I want to know—I've been turned down four times for Social Security. Is there anything that you can do to maybe push it through or something? [*Laughter*] I mean, I have been turned down, and I'd like to be able to get some help.

The President. All right. Well, here, I'll tell you what. Here's the thing, Davy, I don't run the Social Security Administration.

Q. Yes. I know that.

The President. It's the law. But here's one thing that does happen. If I ask a question, I tend to get an answer pretty quick. So what we're going to do is, we're going to get your information, Davy, and I'll make sure the Social Security Administrator takes a look at it and expedites it. All right?

Q. Thank you.

The President. Okay, thank you.

Davy Crockett! You all remember that TV show? Actually, a lot of people are too young here.

[*At this point, the President began to sing "The Ballad of Davy Crockett" as follows.*]

Davy, Davy Crockett. [*Laughter*]

I loved that. Right here. This young lady is going to get the last question, because she wrote me a letter, and when people tell their stories, that reminds me of why I'm doing what I'm doing.

Access to Health Care/Education/Food Stamp Program

Q. Thank you Mr. President. My name is Margaret McAtee, and I'm a retired teacher and school administrator for 38 years in the great State of Ohio. And I moved to Tennessee to be with my son and my grandchildren. And my grandson Patrick said to say hi to you.

The President. Tell Patrick I said hey. [*Laughter*]

Q. Yes, sir.

The President. Okay.

Q. The letter I wrote was after watching you make a speech to college students. And at the time, it was after the fact of the death of my son. And being off of health care immediately after he graduated from Wright State University, and through the process of his illness and his death, how it affected me economically, and paying COBRA and neupogen shots.

And in the context of being a school administrator, as hard as that might have been to me, it was worse for my kids at school, going through much the same thing or worse, with no support system like I had, especially as we went through the economic downturn in the country. And being a high school principal and watching my kids be homeless and transient and mobile and much harder to grab ahold of. And they would be into crime or stealing or whatever for survival on the streets. And they would show up at school, or they'd get off the bus and come down and say, "Doctor McAtee, I need to go to the clinic because I'm sick."

And so our little school clinics became their health care. And sometimes, even their parents would come and say, "Peg, can your nurse check us out?" And at one time, we had one nurse for seven schools.

And so, in terms of people that are lost in the shuffle, especially at the secondary level—transient, homeless children—we had a huge population of homeless children, and they kept my head on straight through the grief I felt with our—in our family because they're so compelling. They don't let—teenagers don't let you sit around and whine. They pull you forward into life.

And my concern for the school systems in this country is for the massive health care issues that walk in the doors of school systems who don't have nursing care, who don't have clinics that are staffed, who don't have the resources. And many of the teachers in America take care of the kids out of their pocket. School cooks feed children, slip them a little bit. I know for a fact that many of my kids only ate with confidence at school. That's one of the reasons I love Mrs. Obama and her promotion of school—of decent school lunch.

I can remember walking into a school system, and the lunch they served was a little piece of cheese, a little short pasty breadstick, and a tiny little tomato sauce cup. And that was lunch until Mrs. Obama brought focus to what was being served our children.

So the kids in the country who are homeless and deprived and transient—as soon as a kid gets 15 or 16, it's hard to—they come, and they show up once in a while, or they go off, and they bounce from home to home or buddy to buddy or situation to situation. They're the ones that I'm worried about falling through the cracks.

And I'm worried about our school system and the focus that we spend more time and effort trying to get what we used to call in Ohio "butts in seats to take tests," instead of seeing to their health care needs and their mental health care needs and support needs so that we can wholly educate a child in the United States of America.

The President. Well, that's a great comment. Well, first of all, Margaret, we're so grateful for you sharing your personal story, because it reminds us of the goodness and generosity of the American people, when somebody like Margaret is going through her own pain, but she's thinking about people other than herself and her family. That kind of spirit is to be found all across the country. And it's not unique to one party. It's not unique to one region. There are good people like Margaret everywhere.

A couple of points I'd just pick up on that you mentioned. Number one, when we talk about the health care system, we have to just remind ourselves of the economic impact of the health care system on families. It's not just feeling bad. Obviously, when you're sick, the—your most important concern is getting well. But what is also true is, is that when you get sick and you don't have health insurance, then that is draining your resources for other things.

Bankruptcy because of medical expenses is a huge portion of the bankruptcies in America. When families lose their house, or a parent has to stop working because of an untreated illness, or they miss too many days at work because they can never go to a doctor and then lose their job or lose incomes from those days they don't work, that can send a household into a spiral. And then, once a household starts breaking down because they lose a home or they lose a car or they lose a job, now, suddenly, you start having people in shelters and people on the streets. And that then affects kids and then their capacity to learn. Right? And you then create cycles of problems that are much harder for people to pull out of.

So part of the reason that it's important for us to get this health care issue right is so that people have at least a stable base from which to then focus on all the other issues that they've got to focus on in their lives. And if we can, as I said before, continue to do a better job of providing high-quality care to everybody, but in a more efficient way, then that will free up resources so that, for example, we can address the underfunding of schools and we can make sure that we are having additional resources inside the schools for things like mental health.

I mean, the number of underdiagnosed young people who end up getting in trouble or dropping out of school just because they didn't get the same health care services that better-off families get, it's substantial. And those—once they drop out, you lose them. And then, they end up in the criminal justice system. And we then end up paying for their incarceration instead of them paying taxes because they're able to get a good job and support a family. And those cycles can build.

One of the most challenging things as President for me is to try to get folks to recognize that investments in people oftentimes save us money over the long term, even if it looks like it costs some money in the short term. And we make this mistake over and over again.

You mentioned school lunches, for example. We know that children's grades and test scores tend to go down at the end of the month, on average, in low-income communities. All right, well, why is that? It's because food stamps start running out at the end of the month and kids are hungry and they're not focused.

Now, it may look smart for us to restrict those benefits, except if even half of those kids ended up doing better in school and didn't drop out and were able to get a job, the society would be much wealthier. If we are focused on mental health services, then we could cut down on the crime rate. If we invest in early childhood education, we know there are improved outcomes that save the society money as a whole.

And let's face it, I mean, part of what prevents us from making those investments in the short term is, is that we've gone through some tough times. The middle class feels strapped. People's incomes and wages haven't gone up, even after the recovery where we dug ourselves out of the crisis. We still have growing

inequality where a huge amount of the increase in income is still going to folks at the very top. And so, if you're a middle class person and you're already struggling and things are tight, then sometimes, you feel like, well, why am I going to pay more taxes to help folks at the bottom? Right? That's, I think, the mentality that a lot of folks have. And it's understandable.

But part of what I've been trying to argue—and I know Jim tries to do it as well—is to recognize that we don't have to choose between middle class families working hard and trying to get ahead and low-income families who are working hard and trying to get ahead, if those of us who've been extremely blessed are just a little more open hearted about how we can help everybody.

And it's—I would like us to just reflect the generosity of spirit that Margaret expresses, because if we all had that generosity of spirit, if we all look at every child as a member of our family, if we think of everybody as part of a single community, then we can solve a lot of these problems. And it won't end up costing us more money, it won't—we won't necessarily have to pay more taxes, we'll just be spending it in different ways.

In some ways, health care is a good metaphor for a lot of the problems we have. We spend things on stuff we don't need, and we neglect the things we do, and we don't end up healthier as a result.

Well, that's not just true for the health care system; that's true for our economy. We waste a lot of money on stuff we don't need. And we underinvest in those things that will make sure that we have a healthy society. And politics oftentimes gets in the way. And part of what I've tried to encourage my own Democratic Party to do is to recognize that not all the money that we spend at the Federal level is smart and some of it—some programs don't work, and we should end those when they don't work and be honest about what's working and what's not.

But part of what I've also tried to do is to say to the Republican Party: Open your hearts and think about the people here in Tennessee who are working hard, are struggling, and just need a little bit of help. And if we give them that help, it's going to pay off over the long term. This will be a stronger State. Employment will be higher. Folks will be paying taxes. Everybody is going to prosper.

We're all in this together. That's what I believe. When America is together and we have a certain generosity of spirit, even if we're hard headed about making sure stuff works right and we're not wasting money, but we're doing what is needed to give everybody a shot in life, that's when America grows. That's when we prosper.

I know that's what you believe too, Margaret. You showed it in your own life. We appreciate you very much.

Thank you. God bless you. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:36 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Nashville, TN, resident Kelly Bryant, who introduced the President; former Sen. William H. Frist; White House Advance Team Lead Alan Bray, who retrieved the President's jacket; Medina, OH, resident and health care reform advocate Natoma A. Canfield; former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; Julie Mix McPeak, commissioner, Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance; and Carolyn W. Colvin, Acting Commissioner, Social Security Administration.

Remarks at the University of Wisconsin–La Crosse in La Crosse, Wisconsin
July 2, 2015

The President. Hello, Wisconsin! I am thrilled to be back in Wisconsin. Hello, UWL! Thank you. Thank you so much. I'm fired up! It is good to be back in "God's Country." I appreciate being anyplace that names an eagle after Stephen Colbert. [*Laughter*]

Happy early Fourth of July, everybody. I figured I'd come here to kick off the long weekend.

Audience member. Get a bratwurst!

The President. I'm looking for a brat. [*Laughter*]

It is wonderful to see your outstanding Senator, Tammy Baldwin, here. Tammy is doing outstanding work in the Senate. And then, over in the House, you've got a Congressman who never forgets his La Crosse roots, Ron Kind. [*Applause*] Yay, Ron! Your mayor, Tim Kabat. Former Governor Jim Doyle. And I want to thank your chancellor, Joe Gow, and everybody who's—everybody who helped to organize this. I'm so appreciative.

Now, I've heard good things about Riverfest. [*Laughter*] We do a pretty good cookout at the White House. In fact, we're having a barbecue for the troops on Saturday. But let's face it, nobody does brats like Wisconsin.

So, no matter where you live, this is a special time of year to be an American. You've got the food, you've got the fireworks. By the way, if you have chairs, feel free to sit. [*Laughter*] I'm going to talk for a while. If you don't have chairs, don't sit down, because you'll fall. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. I love you!

The President. Love you!

But in addition to the fireworks, in addition to the food, this is a chance to celebrate a bedrock principle so deep that generations of Americans have been willing to risk everything to declare it: the idea that all of us are created equal; that all of us are endowed with certain inalienable rights—life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness; and then, it's each generation's obligation to help secure those rights not just for a few, but for everybody.

And that's something that I've spent a lot of time thinking about. It's been a remarkable few weeks in America. Health care is now affirmed as something that everybody can get, not just some. And by the way, it's not just a matter of making sure everybody has access to high-quality care, it's also organizations like Gundersen here in Wisconsin that are doing great work to help to increase quality and to control costs. And so that was a great affirmation.

And then, the freedom to marry who you love, that's now open to all of us. Everybody. That's a good thing. That's a good thing. [*Applause*] That is a good thing.

And then, out of the worst of tragedies, this country is responding with a generosity, but also the kind of self-examination that can lead us to someplace better.

And some folks think all this progress comes really quickly. But the truth is, progress only comes with the persistent, dedicated effort of citizens, people who are, in their own small ways all across the country, are working hard, committed to the promise that's always set this country apart. It doesn't happen because of the Supreme Court; it doesn't happen because of a President or a Member of Congress. It happens because ordinary people work hard and do extraordinary things together; the promise that through hard work and sacrifice, each of us can chase our own individual dreams, but we still come together as one American family to make sure the next generation has opportunity as well.

And that's especially true when it comes to our economy. And that's what I've come to La Crosse to talk about on this Fourth of July weekend.

America has always done better economically when we're all in it together, when everybody gets a fair shot; when everybody gets a fair shot, everybody is doing their fair share, everybody is playing by the same set of rules; when we all feel like we've got a common stake in our success, from the CEO in the corner suite to the workers on the factory floor. That's how we built the great American middle class. When you drive through La Crosse and throughout Wisconsin, when you see communities where kids are thriving and communities are thriving, it's because everybody has a shot. Everybody is working hard. Everybody is pitching in. That's when we're at our best.

Now, this morning we learned that our businesses created another 223,000 jobs last month. And the unemployment rate is now down to 5.3 percent. Keep in mind, when I came into office, it was hovering around 10 percent. All told, we've now seen 64 straight months of private sector job growth, which is a

new record—[*applause*]—new record—12.8 million new jobs all told.

And that's good. But we've got more work to do because we've got to get folks' wages and incomes to keep going up. We've got to make sure folks feel like their hard work is getting them somewhere. And let's face it, there are a lot of folks who still feel like the playing field is tilted in ways that make it hard for them to get ahead.

The challenges facing working men and women didn't all start with this recession. It's been going on for a while now. For a long time, health care was closed off from too many people and cost too much. Our schools too often were underfunded, weren't preparing our kids and our workers for the competition that's coming from the rest of the world.

And by the way, our teachers are underpaid. The—I'm just saying. That's true. Hardest job there is, most important job there is, and we should honor it as such.

The—other nations had been racing ahead on clean energy; we were still addicted to foreign oil when I came into office. So, even as we've worked to put people back to work in the short run, we've also been trying to work to change some of these long-term trends to make sure that we're laying the foundation for future success.

We worked to rebuild our economy on a stronger foundation for growth. And in slow and steady ways, that work is paying off. We believed that we could ship fewer jobs overseas, start bringing new jobs to our shores instead. So we retooled the American auto industry. Today, we're on track to sell more cars and trucks this year than we have in over a decade. We invested in American manufacturing, and after a decade of decline, thanks to some of the steps we took, thanks to the support of folks like Tammy Baldwin and Ron Kind, we've added nearly 900,000 new manufacturing jobs. Manufacturing is actually growing faster than the rest of the economy.

We believed we could prepare our kids for a more competitive world. And today, our high school graduation rate has hit an alltime high; more Americans finish college than ever before.

We believed we could reduce our dependence on foreign oil and do a better job of protecting the planet. Today, America is number one in the traditional fuels, oil and gas, but we're also number one in wind. We generate more than 20 times as much solar electricity as we did in 2008. And thanks to lower gas prices and us setting standards to double fuel efficiency on cars, the typical family is on pace to save about 700 bucks at the pump this year.

We extended tax cuts for 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small businesses, and, yes, we asked the wealthiest Americans—who had been doing better than everybody else not just relatively, but absolutely—we asked them to pay a little bit more to help bring down the deficit. We put in place the toughest Wall Street reform in history that's protecting Main Street from another crisis if folks start acting reckless on Wall Street.

As I already mentioned, health reform means the uninsured rate in America is now the lowest on record. I have these vague recollections of when Republicans were saying Obamacare would kill jobs and crush freedom and bring about death panels. [*Laughter*] And it turns out we're still celebrating the Fourth of July. The only difference is, another 16 million Americans can celebrate it with health care. That's worth celebrating. [*Applause*] Yes. The Republic survived. [*Laughter*]

By one leading measure, what business owners pay out in wages and salaries is now growing faster than what they spend on health care. And that's the first time that's happened since the 1990s. So, not only are more people getting health care, but because we've slowed the growth of health care costs, businesses have more money left over to start giving raises to their workers. That's good for everybody.

Now, I just want to play back the tape. [*Laughter*] I want to play back the tape, because we were told all these measures were going to destroy jobs and explode the deficit. Remember that?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Remember when Republicans promised to bring unemployment down to 6 percent by 2017? [*Laughter*]

So we've got a record streak of private sector job growth. We've cut the deficit by two-thirds. Our stock market has more than doubled, restoring 401(k)s of—for millions of families.

This is progress. Step by step, America is moving forward. Middle class economics works. It works. [*Applause*] Yes!

But we've still got more work to do. As Will Rogers once said, "Even if you're on the right track, you'll still get run over if you just sit there." [*Laughter*] So you've got to keep running. And so the question we've got to keep asking ourselves is, where do we go from here? Because we still have choices. Will we drift toward an economy where only a few of us do very well and everybody else is still scrabbling, struggling to get by? That's not the right way to do it. Or will we keep working towards an economy where everybody who works hard has a chance to succeed?

And over the next year and a half, you're going to hear a lot of pitches from a lot of people. They're going to deny that any progress has been made. You'll hear a lot of folks trying to sell you on their vision of where our country should go. They're going to be making a whole bunch of stuff up. [*Laughter*] And when I say a lot of stuff, I mean a lot of stuff. But I—[*laughter*]. We've got some healthy competition in the Democratic Party, but I've lost count of how many Republicans are running for this job. [*Laughter*] They'll have enough for an actual "Hunger Games." [*Laughter*] I mean, that's a—[*applause*]. That is an interesting bunch. [*Laughter*]

So—but, Wisconsin, I've come here today, I figure why should I let them have all the fun? [*Laughter*] It is a good thing that this time around, you're hearing Republicans joining Democrats, talking about the middle class and working families. And that's good. I welcome them acknowledging that that's an important issue. But just keep in mind, Tammy, Ron, me—we were talking about the middle class before it was cool. [*Laughter*] Before it was trendy. We were talking about it before the polls told you, you should be talking about it. [*Laughter*]

And they talk the talk, but they don't walk the walk. Their menu doesn't have a whole lot of options for the middle class. The one thing that the bus full of people who are fighting to lead the Republican ticket all share is, they keep on coming up with the same old trickle-down, "you're on your own" economics that helped bring about the crisis back in 2007–2008 in the first place.

And I want to emphasize—I know some of them well. They're good people. It's just their ideas are bad. [*Laughter*] And I want to emphasize that. We're one country, we're all on one team, and so we're all one American family. But we all go—we're at Thanksgiving, and Uncle Harry starts saying something, and—[*laughter*]—you say, "Uncle Harry, that makes no sense at all." You still love him. [*Laughter*] He's still a member of your family. Right? But you've got to correct him. You don't want to put him in charge of stuff. [*Laughter*] That's all I'm saying.

And by the way, if there's an Uncle Harry out here—[*laughter*]—I wasn't talking about you. [*Laughter*] I was just using "Harry" as an example.

Here are a few of their bad ideas. Eliminating taxes that the wealthiest Americans pay on their investments while making you pay taxes on every dime of your paycheck, that's a bad idea. That's a bad idea.

Keeping the minimum wage worth less than it was when Ronald Reagan took office before most of you were born, that's a bad idea. Although, to be accurate, at least one of them actually thinks we just shouldn't have a nationwide minimum wage at all; we should just get rid of it.

Every single one of these candidates serving in Congress has supported cutting taxes for folks at the top while slashing investments in education. I know that sounds familiar.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Some of those Members of Congress voted to do it. Every single one of them is still obsessed with repealing the Affordable Care Act despite the fact that, by ev-

ery measure, it's working. You know, look, you could make an argument against Obamacare before it passed—it's something new, it's untried, you don't know. But now, where it's doing exactly what it was supposed to and actually costing less than we expected, and people are satisfied with the coverage we're getting, it just seems a little mean—[*laughter*]—to say that you just—you don't want to provide coverage to 16 million people. And you've got nothing to replace it with. That's a bad idea.

Now, I just to be clear, these are all really their ideas. I'm not making it up. You can go fact-check it. I'm not asking you to select from this list to see which one is actually true. They're all true. And the thing is, there's nothing new about this philosophy. Right? It's a philosophy that believes if we give special breaks to folks at the top, prosperity trickles down for the rest of us.

But we've seen what happens when top-down economics meets the real world. We've got proof right here in Wisconsin. You had a statewide fair pay law that was repealed. Your right to organize and bargain collectively was attacked.

Audience members. No!

The President. Per-student education funding was cut. Your minimum wage has been stuck in place. Meanwhile, corporations and the most fortunate few have been on the receiving end of hundreds of millions of dollars in new tax cuts over the past 4 years.

All right, so that's what's been going on here. What happens when we try middle class economics? Just across the river—[*applause*]—I mean, this is a—it's a pretty interesting experiment. Across the river, in Minnesota, they asked the top 2 percent to pay a little bit more. They invested in things that help everybody succeed, like all-day kindergarten and financial aid for college students. They took action to raise their minimum wage. They passed an equal pay law. They protected workers' rights. They expanded Medicaid to cover more people.

Now, according to the Republican theory, all those steps would have been bad for the economy. But Minnesota's unemployment rate is lower than Wisconsin's. Minnesota's median income is around $9,000 higher. The La Crosse Tribune wrote, "Minnesota is winning this border battle." Now, it is true that, as the Tribune pointed out, Wisconsin does have the Packers. So even a Bears fan can respect the Packers.

And—but understand, I'm saying this—Wisconsin is this extraordinary State filled with extraordinary people. But if you end up having policies that cut education, help folks at the top, aren't expanding opportunity, then it's not going to work. We need better policies, because the bottom line is, top-down economics doesn't work. Middle class economics works. It works. It works. [*Applause*] It works.

And this is also a matter of values. Being an American is not about taking as much as you can from your neighbor before they take as much as they can from you. We're not just a bunch of individuals out here on our own. We're a community. We're a family. We're all in this together.

We all have to work hard. I was taking some photos beforehand with Ron and met a couple folks who've got dairy farms. Nobody works harder than farmers. They know about hard work. Farmers know about hard work. They wake up early, go to bed late. They're worrying all the time about making sure things run. But they also understand about being neighbors and helping each other out. That's America.

We've got to make sure that this economy works for everybody who's willing to work, everybody who's willing to do their fair share. So I want to spend a little—just the rest of my time talking about what that might mean for the 21st century.

Number one, we've got to help working families feel more secure in this world of constant change. That's why health care mattered. If you ever have been locked out of the health care market just because you have a preexisting condition, those days are over. So you can now change jobs, chase that new idea, start a business, because you've got portable, affordable insurance if you need it. And that's going to protect a lot of people in the new economy.

The same applies when it comes to wages and benefits. Instead of treating childcare as a side issue or a women's issue, we've got to treat it like a national economic priority. We've got to make sure that when we've got families where the mom and dad work, that we're putting together ways for them to still make sure their kids are secure and safe.

See, we've got a lot of young people here who don't—aren't really thinking about that yet. And that's good. [*Laughter*]

We've got to make sure we've got sick leave that's in place so that families—if somebody at home gets sick, you're not thinking, do I give up my paycheck or do I take care of my loved one? Everybody should have that basic benefit.

We need to boost the minimum wage. Give America a raise. That's very straightforward. We have to protect, and not attack, a worker's right to organize for fairer wages and better benefits and safer workplaces.

Folks forget sometimes, unions are what helped bring about the 40-hour workweek, helped bring about the idea of the weekend. And I know that's a popular concept. [*Laughter*] Helped establish worker protections, worker safety, a stronger middle class. As I said at Laborfest in Milwaukee last fall, if I were looking for a good job that lets me build some security for my family, I'd join a union, because I'd want a union looking out for me. And we're stronger together than we are by ourselves. I'd want Congress looking out for me too, but you can't always get what you want. [*Laughter*]

So when Congress doesn't act on behalf of working people, what I've tried to do is partner with cities and States and mayors and Governors and acted on my own. Over the past couple of years, 17 States, almost 30 cities and counties have taken action to raise wages. Other cities and States have started guaranteeing workers paid sick days and family leave. And just this week, we took action to protect a worker's right to overtime.

Now, this is an issue of basic fairness. If you work longer, you work harder, you should get paid for it. Today, some companies take advantage of an exception in the rule to make their lower wage employees who really should be paid hourly, they're making them work 50, 60, sometimes 70 hours a week without paying them an extra dime. In extreme cases, it's possible for workers to actually earn less than the minimum wage. So they essentially label somebody as management instead of a worker, even if they're making, like, $25,000, work them a whole bunch of hours. That's a way of getting around the minimum wage. It's not fair.

So we're updating the rules. We're ending that exception. We're making more workers eligible for the overtime that you've earned. And it's one of the single most important steps we can take to help grow middle class wages. It's going to give as many as 5 million Americans, including 80,000 folks right here in Wisconsin, the overtime protections they deserve. It's the right thing to do. [*Applause*] It's the right thing to do. Because in America, a hard day's work deserves a fair day's pay.

Now, in an economy that's constantly changing, we've also got to give every American the chance to earn the skills they need to stay competitive. That's why we've got to be investing in job training and apprenticeships that help folks earn the skills for that new job or better paying job. That's why we should make community college free for responsible students, like Tammy Baldwin is introducing in the United States Senate. No middle class family should be priced out of the education that they need.

And we need to keep churning out high-wage jobs for a better trained workforce to fill, which means investing in basic research and development that leads to new businesses and industries. We should put more Americans to work rebuilding our roads, our railways, our bridges, our ports, our airports.

At a moment where our economy is in a position of global strength, because we're growing faster than most other countries right now—advanced countries—we have to rewrite the rules for the global economy before countries like China do. The other day, I signed a couple of bipartisan bills that will help our businesses sell more goods made in the United States than the rest of the world. And I'm going to keep pushing for trade that is fair and that creates a race not to the bot-

tom, but to the top; that creates better wages and better working conditions. Because when the playing field is level, American workers always win. They always win. We know how to work. Americans know how to work.

So that's what we need for this new economy: Helping hard-working families make ends meet. Give them the tools they need to earn higher wages and better jobs. Keep our businesses the most competitive. Stay on the cutting edge of technology. Invest in research. Rebuild our roads. Rebuild our bridges. That's how we're going to help more middle class families succeed in a new and changing economy. We can't stop the economy globally from changing, but we can make sure we're at the forefront of adapting to it.

And look, I don't want to lie to you. This is hard. If it sounds hard, it's because it's hard. [*Laughter*] I remember when we were working on health care, I had an adviser who—we're in a meeting, and we were going around and around about how we were going to get this thing done. He raised his hand, and he says, Mr. President, the thing is, this is hard, and hard things are hard. [*Laughter*] I said, well, thank you for that astute observation. [*Laughter*] So when he left, he left me a plaque that I put on my desk. It says "Hard things are hard." [*Laughter*] Just in case I forget. [*Laughter*]

Battling back from recession has been hard. Fixing a broken health care system has been hard. Making our economy more competitive for the future, it's hard. But the last 7 years—shoot, the last 7 days—[*laughter*]—should remind us there's nothing America cannot do. There's no challenge we can't solve. There are inspiring Americans who prove this every single day. Nothing we can't do. Nothing we can't do. [*Applause*] There's nothing we can't do.

I've got to admit—let me just, as a quick aside—I've been President for 6½ years now. I do not watch the news. [*Laughter*] Now, I didn't—no offense folks. [*Laughter*] But you'd think, like, every day, the only thing going on are shark attacks and—[*laughter*]—just horrible things. But every day, I do get letters from Americans from all walks of life, and they're doing such amazing, inspiring things. Sometimes, just simple things: working hard, running a farm, looking after their families, teaching a child. And then, every once in a while, they do something that has an even broader impact.

So Steve Cottrell lives right here in La Crosse. I'm going to use him as an example. Steve? Steve is right there. He's going to start blushing, but I'm going to talk about him anyway.

In 2002, he started a small business out of his house to help manage data for car companies and dealerships. By 2007, he employed a handful of people. Then, he was hit with a double whammy: The recession came, and the auto industry almost went belly up. But we refused to walk away from people like Steve. That shot in the arm, Steve says, was enough to keep his company's confidence going. During the worst years of the recession, Steve invested in new people, new technology, decided to double down, was absolutely confident his business model was right.

As the auto industry came roaring back, things began booming. And since 2007, Steve's revenue is up a thousand percent. His company, Authenticom, has gone from 18 employers—18 employees to more than 120. So this business that began in Steve's son's old bedroom is now one of America's fastest growing private companies, based in a restored historic building right in downtown La Crosse.

Now, I guarantee you, Steve worked hard. He put everything he had into it. He took enormous risks. But he's also somebody who recognizes that he didn't do it by himself. He's proud of what he's accomplished, but he also talks about how fortunate he's been to part of—to be part of a community like La Crosse, to be part of an industry that got back to basics, determined to do things better and smarter. He pays his employees fair wages. He guarantees paid sick days. He helps pay for the tuition of those folks when they decide to go back to school. He created a stock appreciation program so when the business does

better, his workers do better also. And then, most importantly, there's "Free lunch Friday." [*Laughter*] Who doesn't like "Free Lunch Friday," right?

So look, I want to read something Steve said. He said: "You can't always do everything that everyone would like. But if you treat everybody like family, that's good for us." If you treat everybody like family, that's good for us.

What's true for Steve's business is true for America. If you treat everybody like family, that's good for us. Not just me, not just you, not just Democrats, not just Republicans, not just old folks or young folks, not just Black folks or White folks—it's good for us.

We're not going to solve every problem in one fell swoop. But if we make things a little better for our fellow Americans, we're going to leave something better for us and for our kids. And if we're walking down that road together, we're going to get there faster.

That's what we're fighting for, everybody. That's what we're fighting for, Wisconsin. That's what's Tammy is fighting for and Ron is fighting for. That's what we all have to fight for.

Happy Fourth of July, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:34 p.m. in the Recreational Eagle Center. In his remarks, he referred to Stephen T. Colbert, former host, Comedy Central's "The Colbert Report" program; former Gov. John E. "Jeb" Bush of Florida; and former White House Senior Adviser David M. Axelrod.

The President's Weekly Address
July 4, 2015

Happy Fourth of July, everybody. Like many of you, Michelle, Sasha, Malia, and I are going to spend the day outdoors, grilling burgers, hot dogs, watching the fireworks with our family and friends. It's also Malia's birthday, which always makes the Fourth extra fun for us.

As always, we've invited some very special guests to our backyard barbecue: several hundred members of our military and their families. On this most American of holidays, we remember that all who serve here at home and overseas represent what today is all about. And we remember that their families serve too. We are so grateful for their service and for their sacrifice.

We remember as well that this is the day when, 239 years ago, our founding patriots declared our independence, proclaiming that all of us are created equal, endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights, including the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

A couple of centuries later, we've made ourselves into a big, bold, dynamic, and diverse country. We're of all races, we come from all places, we practice all faiths and believe in all sorts of different ideas. But our allegiance to this declaration—this idea—is the creed that binds us together. It's what, out of many, makes us one.

And it's been the work of each successive generation to keep this founding creed safe by making sure its words apply to every single American. Folks have fought, marched, protested, even died for that endeavor, proving that as Americans, our destiny is not written for us, but by us.

We honor those heroes today. We honor everyone who continually strives to make this country a better, stronger, more inclusive, more hopeful place. And we the people pledge to make their task our own, to secure the promise of our founding words for our own children and our children's children.

And finally, what better weekend than this to cheer on Team U.S.A. Good luck to the U.S. Women's National Team in the World Cup Final!

Thanks, everybody. From my family to yours, have a safe and happy Fourth of July.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2:35 p.m. on July 2 in Room 188 of the University of Wisconsin–La Crosse Recreational

Eagle Center in La Crosse, WI, for broadcast on July 4. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 3, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on July 4.

Remarks at an Independence Day Celebration
July 4, 2015

Everybody having a good time? Everybody, give it up for Bruno Mars! And the band!

Michelle and I just want to say to everybody here, we love you. On this day, we thank everyone who does so much each and every day to defend our country, to defend our freedom. We are grateful to our Armed Services. We are grateful to our military families. We are grateful to our veterans.

Without you, we could not enjoy the incredible blessings that we do in this greatest country on Earth. And we are so appreciative to all of you. We hope you are having a good time. The weather is cooperating. And Michelle and I, Malia, Sasha, we could not be more privileged to have gotten to know so many of you and to know all the sacrifices that you make on our behalf each and every day.

So we just want to wish you the happiest Fourth of July and remind ourselves that freedom is not free. It's paid by all the folks who are here today and all the folks who are around the world. We want to thank those who aren't with their families on this holiday season because they're posted overseas. We want to especially remember them.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:56 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to musician Bruno Mars.

Remarks on United States Efforts To Combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization and an Exchange With Reporters at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia
July 6, 2015

The President. Good afternoon, everybody. I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday weekend, especially our men and women in uniform. This Fourth of July we were honored to once again welcome some of our incredible troops and their families to share Fourth of July and fireworks at the White House. And it was another chance for us, on behalf of the American people, to express our gratitude for their extraordinary service around the world every single day.

And that includes the work that brings me here today, our mission to degrade and ultimately destroy the terrorist group ISIL. This is a cause, a coalition, that's united countries across the globe, some 60 nations, including Arab partners. Our comprehensive strategy against ISIL is harnessing all elements of American power, across our Government: military, intelligence, diplomatic, economic, development, and perhaps most importantly, the power of our values.

Last month, I ordered additional actions in support of our strategy. I just met with my national security team as part of our regular effort to assess our efforts—what's working and what we can do better. Secretary Carter, Chairman Dempsey, I want to thank you and your team for welcoming us and for your leadership, including General Austin, who's leading the military campaign. And I want to summarize briefly where we stand.

I want to start by repeating what I've said since the beginning. This will not be quick. This is a long-term campaign. ISIL is opportunistic, and it is nimble. In many places in Syria and Iraq, including urban areas, it's dug in among innocent civilian populations. It will take time to root them out, and doing so must

be the job of local forces on the ground, with training and air support from our coalition.

As with any military effort, there will be periods of progress, but there are also going to be some setbacks, as we've seen with ISIL's gains in Ramadi in Iraq and central and southern Syria. But today it's also important for us to recognize the progress that's been made.

Our coalition has now hit ISIL with more than 5,000 airstrikes. We've taken out thousands of fighting positions, tanks, vehicles, bomb factories, and training camps. We've eliminated thousands of fighters, including senior ISIL commanders. And over the past year, we've seen that when we have an effective partner on the ground, ISIL can be pushed back.

In Iraq, ISIL lost at the Mosul Dam. ISIL lost at Mount Sinjar. ISIL has lost repeatedly across Kirkuk Province. ISIL lost at Tikrit. Altogether, ISIL has lost more than a quarter of the populated areas that it had seized in Iraq. In Syria, ISIL lost at Kobani. It's recently endured losses across northern Syria, including the key city of Tal Abyad, denying ISIL a vital supply route to Raqqa, its base of operations in Syria.

So these are reminders that ISIL's strategic weaknesses are real. ISIL is surrounded by countries and communities committed to its destruction. It has no air force; our coalition owns the skies. ISIL is backed by no nation. It relies on fear, sometimes executing its own disillusioned fighters. Its unrestrained brutality often alienates those under its rule, creating new enemies. In short, ISIL's recent losses in both Syria and Iraq prove that ISIL can and will be defeated.

Indeed, we're intensifying our efforts against ISIL's base in Syria. Our airstrikes will continue to target the oil and gas facilities that fund so much of their operations. We're going after the ISIL leadership and infrastructure in Syria, the heart of ISIL that pumps funds and propaganda to people around the world. Partnering with other countries—sharing more information, strengthening laws and border security—allows us to work to stem the flow of foreign fighters to Syria as well as Iraq and to stem, obviously, the flow of those fighters back into our own countries. This continues to be a challenge, and working together, all our nations are going to need to do more, but we're starting to see some progress.

We'll continue cracking down on ISIL's illicit finance around the world. By the way, if Congress really wants to help in this effort, they can confirm Mr. Adam Szubin, our nominee for Treasury Under Secretary to lead this effort. This is a vital position to our counterterrorism efforts. Nobody suggests Mr. Szubin is not qualified. He's highly qualified. Unfortunately, his nomination has been languishing up on the Hill, and we need the Senate to confirm him as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, we continue to ramp up our training and support of local forces that are fighting ISIL on the ground. As I've said before, this aspect of our strategy was moving too slowly. But the fall of Ramadi has galvanized the Iraqi Government. So with the additional steps I ordered last month, we're speeding up training of ISIL [Iraqi]* forces, including volunteers from Sunni tribes in Anbar Province.

More Sunni volunteers are coming forward. Some are already being trained, and they can be a new force against ISIL. We continue to accelerate the delivery of critical equipment, including antitank weapons, to Iraqi security forces, including the Peshmerga and tribal fighters. And I made it clear to my team that we will do more to train and equip the moderate opposition in Syria.

Now, all this said, our strategy recognizes that no amount of military force will end the terror that is ISIL unless it's matched by a broader effort—political and economic—that addresses the underlying conditions that have allowed ISIL to gain traction. They have filled a void, and we have to make sure that, as we push them out, that void is filled. So as Iraqi cities and towns are liberated from ISIL, we're working with Iraq and the United Nations to help communities rebuild the security, servic-

* White House correction.

es, and governance that they need. We continue to support the efforts of Prime Minister Abadi to forge an inclusive and effective Iraqi Government that unites all the people of Iraq: Shia, Sunnis, Kurds, and all minority communities.

In Syria, the only way that the civil war will end—and in a way so that the Syrian people can unite against ISIL—is an inclusive political transition to a new government, without Bashar Asad, a government that serves all Syrians. I discussed this with our Gulf Cooperation Council partners at Camp David and during my recent call with President Putin. I made it clear the United States will continue to work for such a transition.

And a glimmer of good news is, I think, an increasing recognition on the part of all the players in the region that, given the extraordinary threat that ISIL poses, it is important for us to work together, as opposed to at cross purposes, to make sure that an inclusive Syrian Government exists.

While the focus of our discussions today was on Iraq and Syria, ISIL and its ideology also obviously pose a grave threat beyond the region. In recent weeks, we've seen deadly attacks in Tunisia, Kuwait, and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. We see a growing ISIL presence in Libya and attempts to establish footholds across North Africa, the Middle East, the Caucasus, and Southeast Asia. We've seen attacks in Ottawa, Sydney, France, and Copenhagen.

So I've called on the international community to unite against this scourge of violent extremism. In this fight, the United States continues to lead. When necessary to prevent attacks against our Nation, we'll take direct action against terrorists. We'll continue to also partner with nations from Afghanistan to Nigeria to build up their security forces. We're going to work day and night with allies and partners to disrupt terrorist networks and thwart attacks, and to smother nascent ISIL cells that may be trying to develop in other parts of the world.

This also includes remaining vigilant in protecting against attacks here in the homeland. Now, I think it's important for us to recognize, the threat of violent extremism is not restricted to any one community. Here in the United States, we've seen all kinds of homegrown terrorism. And tragically, recent history reminds us how even a single individual motivated by a hateful ideology with access to dangerous weapons can inflict horrendous harm on Americans. So our efforts to counter violent extremism must not target any one community because of their faith or background, including patriotic Muslim Americans who are our partners in keeping our country safe.

That said, we also have to acknowledge that ISIL has been particularly effective at reaching out to and recruiting vulnerable people around the world, including here in the United States. And they are targeting Muslim communities around the world. Numerous individuals have been arrested across the country for plotting attacks or attempting to join ISIL in Syria and Iraq. Two men apparently inspired by ISIL open-fired in Garland, Texas. And because of our success over the years in improving our homeland security, we've made it harder for terrorists to carry out large-scale attacks like 9/11 here at home.

But the threat of lone wolves or small cells of terrorists is complex. It's harder to detect and harder to prevent. It's one of the most difficult challenges that we face. And preventing these kinds of attacks on American soil is going to require sustained effort.

So I just want to repeat, the good news is that because of extraordinary efforts from law enforcement as well as our military intelligence, we are doing a better job at preventing any large-scale attacks on the homeland. On the other hand, these small, individual lone wolf attacks or small cells become harder to detect and they become more sophisticated, using new technologies. And that means that we're going to have to pick up our game to prevent these attacks.

It's also true why, ultimately, in order for us to defeat terrorist groups like ISIL and Al Qaida is going to also require us to discredit their ideology: the twisted thinking that draws vulnerable people into their ranks. As I've said before—and I know our military leaders agree—this broader

challenge of countering violent extremism is not simply a military effort. Ideologies are not defeated with guns, they're defeated by better ideas, a more attractive and more compelling vision.

So the United States will continue to do our part, by working with partners to counter ISIL's hateful propaganda, especially online. We'll constantly reaffirm through words and deeds that we will never be at war with Islam. We're fighting terrorists who distort Islam and whose victims are mostly Muslims. But around the world, we're also going to insist on partnering with Muslim communities as they seek security, prosperity, and the dignity that they deserve. And we're going to expect those communities to step up in terms of pushing back as hard as they can, in conjunction with other people of good will, against these hateful ideologies in order to discredit them more effectively, particularly when it comes to what we're teaching young people.

And this larger battle for hearts and minds is going to be a generational struggle. It's ultimately not going to be won or lost by the United States alone. It will be decided by the countries and the communities that terrorists like ISIL target. It's going to be up to Muslim communities, including scholars and clerics, to keep rejecting warped interpretations of Islam and to protect their sons and daughters from recruitment. It will be up to all people—leaders and citizens—to reject the sectarianism that so often fuels the resentments and conflicts upon which terrorists are currently thriving. It will be up to governments to address the political and economic grievances that terrorists exploit.

Nations that empower citizens to decide their own destiny, that uphold human rights for all their people, that invest in education and create opportunities for their young people—those can be powerful antidotes to extremist ideologies. Those are the countries that will find a true partner in the United States.

In closing, let me note that this Fourth of July, we celebrated 239 years of American independence. Across more than two centuries, we've faced much bigger, much more formidable challenges than this—Civil War, a Great Depression, fascism, communism, terrible natural disasters, 9/11. And every time, every generation, our Nation has risen to the moment. We don't simply endure, we emerge stronger than before. And that will be the case here.

Our mission to destroy ISIL and to keep our country safe will be difficult. It will take time. There will be setbacks as well as progress. But as President and Commander in Chief, I want to say to all our men and women in uniform who are serving in this operation—our pilots, the crews on the ground, our personnel not only on the ground, but at sea, our intelligence teams, and our diplomatic teams—I want to thank you. We are proud of you, and you have my total confidence that you're going to succeed.

To the American people, I want to say we will continue to be vigilant. We will persevere. And just as we have for more than two centuries, we will ultimately prevail.

Thank you very much, everybody. And thanks to the team up on the stage here with me. They're doing an outstanding job. Good.

Q. Take a question?

The President. You know what, I will take a question. Go ahead.

Servicemember Compensation/Defense Spending

Q. Every serviceman who is listening to you today, Mr. President, is wondering, are you going to veto the defense bills that are going to pay me? What is your latest thinking on that? Because we've heard secondhand through statements of policy that your advisers would threaten a veto. What's your take, sir? Would you veto the appropriations bills?

The President. Our men and women are going to get paid. And if you'll note that I've now been President for 6½ years and we've had some wrangling with Congress in the past; our servicemembers haven't missed a paycheck.

But what is also important in terms of our budget is making sure that we are not shortchanging all the elements of American power that allow us to secure the Nation and to project our power around the world. So what we're not going to do is to accept a budget that short-

changes our long-term requirements for new technologies, for readiness. We're not going to eat our seed corn by devoting too much money on things we don't need now and robbing ourselves of the capacity to make sure that we're prepared for future threats.

I've worked very closely with the Chairman and the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to develop a budget that is realistic and that looks out into the future and says this is how we're going to handle any possible contingency. And we can't do that if we've got a budget that short-changes vital operations and continues to fund things that are not necessary.

We also have to remind ourselves that the reason we have the best military in the world is, first and foremost, because we've got the best troops in history. But it's also because we've got a strong economy and we've got a well-educated population. And we've got an incredible research operation and universities that allow us to create new products that then can be translated into our military superiority around the world. We short-change those, we're going to be less secure.

So the way we have to look at this budget is to recognize that, A, we can't think short term, we've got to think long term; and B, part of our national security is making sure that we continue to have a strong economy and that we continue to make the investments that we need in things like education and research that are going to be vital for us to be successful long term.

Q. Mr. President, what's next for Greece?

U.S. Overseas Troop Deployments/Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization

Q. As an Army reservist, I'm curious to know if you have any plans to send any more American troops overseas right now, any additional forces.

The President. There are no current plans to do so. That's not something that we currently discussed. I've always said that I'm going to do what's necessary to protect the homeland.

One of the principles that we all agree on, though, and I pressed folks pretty hard because in these conversations with my military advisers I want to make sure I'm getting blunt and unadultered, uncensored advice. But in every one of the conversations that we've had, the strong consensus is that in order for us to succeed long-term in this fight against ISIL, we have to develop local security forces that can sustain progress.

It is not enough for us to simply send in American troops to temporarily set back organizations like ISIL, but to then, as soon as we leave, see that void filled once again with extremists. It is going to be vital for us to make sure that we are preparing the kinds of local ground forces and security forces with our partners that can not only succeed against ISIL, but then sustain in terms of security and in terms of governance.

Because if we try to do everything ourselves all across the Middle East, all across of North Africa, we'll be playing Whac-a-Mole, and there will be a whole lot of unintended consequences that ultimately make us less secure.

All right? Thank you, everybody. I didn't even plan to do this. [*Laughter*] You guys got two bonus questions.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:10 p.m. in the Press Briefing Room. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter; Gen. Lloyd J. Austin, USA, commander, U.S. Central Command; Under Secretary–designate of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Crimes Adam J. Szubin; President Bashar al-Asad of Syria; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; and Elton Simpson and Nadir Soofi, suspected gunmen in the shooting at the Curtis Culwell Center in Garland, TX, on May 3. A reporter referred to H.R. 1735.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Communist Party General Secretary Nguyen Phú Trong of Vietnam
July 7, 2015

General Secretary Trong. And again, let me invite you to visit Vietnam, together with the First Lady. [*Laughter*]

President Obama. As you heard, I got an invitation to Vietnam. And I think this is indicative of the remarkable progress that's taken place in the relationship between our two countries over the last 20 years.

I want to welcome General Secretary Trong to the Oval Office for his first visit to the United States during this 20-year anniversary of the normalization of relations between the United States and Vietnam.

Obviously, there has been a difficult history between our two countries in the 20th century. And there continue to be significant differences in political philosophy and political systems between our two countries. But because, I think, of the efforts of leaders in both parties here in the United States, as well as the leadership in Vietnam over successive years, what we've seen is the emergence of a constructive relationship that is based on mutual respect and that has benefited the peoples of both countries.

Already in the last 2 years alone, we've made significant progress on deepening our cooperation in the areas of education, science, technology, climate change, public health, as well as security issues. And this was an excellent opportunity for us to deepen our discussions around our vision for a comprehensive partnership.

We discussed the Trans-Pacific Partnership, or TPP, and the enormous potential of a high-standards trade agreement that raises labor standards, raises environmental standards, and could potentially create significant job growth and prosperity for both the Vietnamese and the American people.

We discussed the importance of resolving maritime disputes in the South China Sea and throughout the Asia-Pacific in accordance with international law, to ensure that the prosperity and freedom of navigation that has underwritten the enormous economic growth that's taken place in the region continues for decades to come.

We discussed continuing people-to-people exchanges. As General Secretary Trong noted, we have more Vietnamese Americans here and expatriate Vietnamese than any other country in the world, and they've made enormous contributions to our country. We want to continue to deepen those exchanges, including through the soon-to-be-opened Fulbright University that has just been approved.

And we also discussed the importance of us cooperating on global issues, particularly climate change, which could have a profound impact on both our countries; issues of global health security and dealing with the potential of pandemic; global peacekeeping. In all these areas, Vietnam has proven to be a very constructive partner.

There remain to be—there remain differences in the bilateral relationship, and we discussed candidly some of our differences around issues of human rights, for example, and freedom of religion. But what I'm confident about is that the diplomatic dialogue and practical steps that we are taking together will benefit both countries, that these tensions can be resolved in an effective fashion and that not only bilaterally, but also through our cooperation in multilateral organizations like ASEAN and the East Asia Summit, we can continue to make significant strides.

So I want to thank once again General Secretary Trong for his visit. I hope he has felt the warmth and hospitality that the American people feel towards all the people of Vietnam. And I certainly do look forward to visiting your beautiful country sometime in the future.

General Secretary Trong. Thank you, Mr. President. And good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

I think that 20 years ago, not too many people would imagine a meeting—interesting meeting, a substantive meeting—between the

General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam and the President of the United States. And as the President just mentioned, we had a cordial, constructive, positive, and frank discussion with each other. What is of utmost importance is that we have been transformed from former enemies to become friends, partners, comprehensive partners. And I'm convinced that our relationship will continue to grow in the future.

I think these achievements are owed to the strategic vision and the efforts by all leaders of the two countries, but also thanks to the support—the full support—of the peoples of the two countries. Because it is in their interest that we want to promote this relationship. This relationship is also contributing significantly to peace, stability, cooperation for prosperity in the region and around the world.

Like the President just mentioned, there had been a bad, difficult chapter in our history, but we have been able to rise above the past to overcome differences, to promote our shared interests, and look towards a future in order to build the comprehensive partnership that we have today. And as I mentioned to the President in our meeting, the past cannot be changed, but the future depends on our action, and it is our responsibility to ensure a bright future.

At the meeting today, the President and I reviewed the growth of our relations over the past 20 years, and we also discussed and agreed on the major directions for moving our relationship forward to make it more substantive, more positive, to build the mutual trust and cooperation between the two countries. And we agreed to continue to promote the comprehensive relationship between the two countries in all areas, ranging from political, diplomatic cooperation, to economic, trade, investment, education and training, environment, public health, responding to climate change, to defense and security cooperation, as well as better collaboration at regional and international forums.

In a constructive and candid manner, we also discussed our differences and the way forward, including the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the TPP, as well as the human rights issues. At the same time, we discussed and shared our views on the recent developments in the South China Sea, and also, I shared our concern about the recent activities that are not in accordance with international law that may complicate the situation.

And I had the particular honor to extend our invitation to the President and the First Lady to visit Vietnam, and I'm glad that the President had graciously accepted my invitation.

Once again, I would like to thank the President and the U.S. Government for inviting me to visit your beautiful country. And allow me also to take this opportunity to send my greetings and best regards to the Vietnamese community here in the United States. We hope for further growth in our relationship.

President Obama. Excellent.

General Secretary Trong. Hope to see you again soon.

President Obama. Thank you.

Thank you, guys. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:32 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. General Secretary Trong spoke in Vietnamese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Joint Statement—United States-Vietnam Joint Vision Statement
July 7, 2015

At the invitation of the Administration of President Barack Obama, His Excellency Nguyen Phu Trong, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), paid a historic visit to the United States, the first by a CPV's General Secretary. On this occasion, which included a meeting between President Barack Obama and General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong at the White House on July 7, 2015, the United States and Vietnam adopted this Joint Vision Statement.

The United States and Vietnam recognize the positive and substantive developments in many areas of cooperation over the past 20 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations, particularly the growth in economic and trade cooperation, cooperation in addressing war legacy issues as well as in science and technology, education, healthcare, environment, response to climate change, defense, security, human rights, and increasing regional and international cooperation on issues of mutual concern.

The United States and Vietnam have made numerous significant accomplishments since the formation of the United States-Vietnam Comprehensive Partnership in 2013. In particular, there has been continued rapid growth in bilateral trade and investment; the entry into force of the "123" Agreement for Cooperation Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy; Vietnam's endorsement of the Proliferation Security Initiative's Statement of Interdiction Principles; the easing of U.S. restriction of arms sales; the signing of the Joint Vision Statement on Defense Relations; and increased cooperation on regional and multilateral issues. The first-ever dialogues and exchanges between entities associated with the Communist Party of Vietnam on the one hand and institutes associated with the Republican and Democratic Parties in the United States on the other also took place, as envisaged by the 2013 Comprehensive Partnership.

The achievements in United States-Vietnam relations are possible thanks to constructive joint efforts to rise above the past, overcome differences, and promote shared interests looking toward the future.

Vision for United States-Vietnam Relations: Deepening a Long-Term Partnership

Looking toward the future of bilateral relations and building on the Comprehensive Partnership, both countries affirm their continued pursuit of a deepened, sustained, and substantive relationship on the basis of respect for the United Nations Charter, international law, and each other's political systems, independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. The two sides are committed to maximizing shared interests and cooperation at both bilateral and multilateral levels, for the benefit of both peoples, contributing to peace, stability, cooperation and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region and the world.

Strengthening political and diplomatic relations, increasing exchanges at high levels, and expanding bilateral consultations to continue to build trust and improve cooperation remain priorities for both the United States and Vietnam, as are enhancing economic, trade, and investment cooperation and deepening cooperation in science and technology, education, training, health, environment, and law enforcement. The two countries recognize the success of the Vietnamese community in the United States and their many contributions both to the development of the United States and Vietnam and to better United States-Vietnam bilateral relations.

The United States and Vietnam reaffirm continued bilateral cooperation in defense and security, as outlined in the United States-Vietnam Joint Vision Statement on Defense Relations. Both countries underscore their commitment to collaborating on, among other issues, addressing non-traditional security threats, cooperation in maritime security, maritime domain awareness, defense trade and information sharing, search and rescue, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and defense technology exchange. Both countries welcome joint efforts to address war legacy issues, including the humanitarian mission of missing in action (MIA) recovery, the clearance of unexploded ordinance and dioxin remediation, and further assistance for these humanitarian efforts.

The United States and Vietnam expect to work in close coordination with the other negotiating parties to conclude the ambitious and comprehensive Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement as soon as possible and to carry out whatever reforms may be necessary to meet the high standards of the TPP agreement, including as necessary with respect to commitments relating to the 1998 ILO Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Both countries are committed to a high-

quality, balanced TPP agreement that meets the interests of all parties and creates a new long-lasting, mutually beneficial framework for economic and trade cooperation between the United States and Vietnam, while providing a new impetus for regional economic cooperation and contributing to cooperation and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region. The United States applauds Vietnam's progress in economic reforms and affirms continued support for and constructive engagement with Vietnam, and the United States notes Vietnam's interest in pursuing market economy country status.

Both countries pledge continued support for the promotion and protection of human rights and support the maintenance of positive, frank, and constructive dialogue on human rights to improve mutual understanding, and reduce differences. They encourage further cooperation to ensure that everyone, including members of vulnerable groups, regardless of their gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation, and including persons with disabilities, enjoy fully their human rights. The United States welcomes Vietnam's ongoing efforts to harmonize its laws with its 2013 Constitution and international commitments, which Vietnam undertakes for its comprehensive development, including the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The United States welcomes Vietnam's ratification of the Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the two countries look forward to technical cooperation in this regard.

The United States and Vietnam expect to accelerate education cooperation, including through institutions like Fulbright University Vietnam and other university partnerships and in the areas of English language collaboration. The promotion of people-to-people exchanges remains important. Both countries expect to consider visa facilitation measures to encourage greater numbers of tourists, students, and business visitors to both countries, and call for relevant U.S. and Vietnamese agencies to conclude as soon as possible a bilateral agreement on the construction of new compounds of their representative missions, including their embassies.

Increasing Cooperation on Global and Regional Issues

The United States welcomes Vietnam's active international integration policy, and Vietnam welcomes the United States' policy of enhanced cooperation with the Asia-Pacific region. Each country commends the other's contribution to supporting peace, security, stability and prosperity in the region and the world over. The United States and Vietnam are also committed to strengthening cooperation on regional and global issues of mutual interest and concern.

The two countries are committed to promoting cooperation on sustainable development, addressing traditional and non-traditional security threats, including natural disasters, wildlife trafficking, water security, and pandemics. The two countries are committed to expanding collaboration on peacekeeping operations and climate change and look forward to the 2016 Nuclear Security Summit and to concrete national actions to promote nuclear security. The two countries pledge to expand cooperation on the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA), including toward achieving the GHSA targets as soon as possible.

The United States and Vietnam are committed to enhancing cooperation in regional fora, such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum, Lower Mekong Initiative, and the East Asia Summit, and recognize the importance of a united and strong ASEAN, ASEAN's central role in the regional political and security architecture, and the United States-ASEAN Strategic Partnership.

Both countries are concerned about recent developments in the South China Sea that have increased tensions, eroded trust, and threatened to undermine peace, security, and stability. They recognize the imperative of upholding the internationally-recognized freedoms of navigation and overflight; unimpeded

lawful commerce, maritime security and safety; refraining from actions that raise tensions; ensuring that all actions and activities taken comply with international law; and rejecting coercion, intimidation, and the use or threat of force. Both countries support the peaceful resolution of disputes in conformity with international law, including as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 (UNCLOS), and recognize the importance of fully implementing the Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea in its entirety, as well as efforts to conclude the Code of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea.

Agreements and Arrangements Reached

The following agreements and arrangements foster development of United States-Vietnam bilateral relations and form the firm foundation upon which both countries' future cooperation will continue to build, such as:

- Agreement between the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Government of the United States of America for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion and with Respect to Taxes on Income;
- The Memorandum of Understanding on Between the Ministry of National Defense of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Department of Defense of the United States of America on United Nations Peacekeeping Cooperation;
- The Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Vietnam Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Vietnam and the United States Agency for International Development regarding the Emerging Pandemic Threats Program the Global Health Security Agenda;
- The Vietnam Aviation Safety Technical Assistance Project Agreement between the U.S. Trade and Development Agency and the Civil Aviation Authority of Vietnam; and
- Vietnam's granting of the license for the new Fulbright University Vietnam.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Statement on the Death of Former Minister of Foreign Affairs Saud al-Faysal bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia
July 9, 2015

On behalf of the American people, I express my deep condolences to the family of Prince Saud bin Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, to King Salman and to the people of Saudi Arabia on the loss of such a committed and accomplished diplomat.

As the world's longest serving Foreign Minister, Prince Saud witnessed some of the most challenging periods in the region. At each turn, he advanced the goals of peace, whether negotiating the end to Lebanon's civil war or helping to launch the Arab Peace Initiative.

Generations of American leaders and diplomats benefited from Prince Saud's thoughtful perspective, charisma and poise, and diplomatic skill. He was committed to the importance of the U.S.-Saudi relationship and the pursuit of stability and security in the Middle East and beyond, and his legacy will be remembered around the world. May God grant him peace.

Remarks at the Kids' State Dinner
July 10, 2015

The President. Good to see you! Hello, everybody! How are you? So, all right, everybody can have a seat. Have a seat.

I'm sorry to crash your little party here. [*Laughter*] But I just wanted to say hi to everybody. And I wanted to let you know that, first of all, I'm very proud of everything that my outstanding wife has done when it comes to healthy eating and "Let's Move!" And we're celebrating the fifth anniversary of "Let's Move!" So do you guys move?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. You guys are movers? Okay. You guys look pretty healthy, I've got to admit. This is a good-looking group. [*Laughter*]

The First Lady. A good-looking group.

The President. And so I also just wanted to let you know that although I can't stay and eat right now, that I've looked over the menu, and the food looks outstanding. I particularly am impressed with the Barackamole. [*Laughter*] So I'm expecting people to save me a little sampling of the Barackamole.

I also noticed that there are a lot of good vegetables on the menu, including my favorite vegetable, broccoli. [*Laughter*] Do I—who—did somebody raise their hand there?

The First Lady. Well, I told these two that was your favorite vegetable.

The President. You didn't believe me? [*Laughter*] It's true, I love broccoli. I eat it all the time. Anybody else love broccoli?

Audience members. Yes.

The President. That's what I'm talking about. [*Laughter*]

So I know that all your parents are so proud of you for having come up with these outstanding recipes. And the reason it's so important for you guys to be here and to be doing what you're doing is because the truth is, is that parents, it turns out, don't always have the most influence—[*laughter*].

The First Lady. Yes, I know. It's sad.

The President. ——in terms of encouraging young people to eat healthy.

What really helps is when their friends at school are all, like, oh, you're having chips? I'm sorry, I'm having the Barackamole. [*Laughter*] And then, because you're a cool kid, suddenly, the other kids are all, like, well, if that cool kid's eating broccoli, maybe I should try that broccoli out. So you guys are setting a great example for all your friends in school and in the neighborhoods, and I—we're really proud of you for that.

All right? So I'm proud of you. And I hope you guys have a wonderful dinner. And I'm going to come around and shake hands with people, but I can't take selfies with everybody because I've actually got just a few other things to do. [*Laughter*]

The First Lady. Yes.

The President. So that would end up taking too long. All right? But you can take pictures while I'm shaking hands. I just can't, like, pose and—[*laughter*]—all that stuff.

Oops, that's okay, I get nervous too. [*Laughter*]

The First Lady. We do that all the time.

The President. Whenever I'm at state dinners, I'm always spilling stuff. [*Laughter*] Usually on my tie.

Thank you, everybody.

The First Lady. All right! Let's eat!

The President. Let's eat!

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 12 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. The transcript was released by the Office of the First Lady, and it included the First Lady's complete remarks.

Remarks on Signing Proclamations Establishing the Basin and Range National Monument, the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument, and the Waco Mammoth National Monument
July 10, 2015

As many of you know, one of the great legacies of this incredible country of ours is our national parks and national monuments. It is something that we pass on from generation to generation, not only preserving the incredible beauty of this Nation, but also reminding us of the richness of its history. And I am especially pleased to be able to announce three new designations that are going to be taking place in varied landscapes, but all of them speak to some incredible history.

The first, we are going to be designating the Waco Mammoth National Monument. This is one of the most incredible collections of mammoth fossils anywhere in the country. And for us to be able to preserve this space is going to be important not only to scientists, but also to many people who are able to take a look at this incredible landscape down in Texas.

We're also designating the Basin and Range area of southeastern Nevada—the Basin and Range National Monument. This is one of the most undisturbed corners of the Great Basin region, and its topography is unique. It is a place that attracts already a large number of visitors because of some of its unique geological aspects. And we're going to be able to make sure that even more visitors are aware and take advantage of this incredible landscape.

And finally, we're going to be designating the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument in California's wild Inner Coast Range. Once covered by ocean waters, it's a landscape that is shaped by geological forces that are unique, and it has been a refuge for Native American inhabitants for 11,000 years, so it gives you a sense of, sort of, the timescales that we're working off of with some of these national monuments.

Teddy Roosevelt, it's been said, had America's best idea when he talked about preserving our incredible national heritage. And for me to be able to add to that heritage is greatly appreciated.

I want to thank our outstanding Secretary of the Interior, Sally Jewell, and everybody in the Park Service who does such a great job.

One of the wonderful things about our use of the Antiquities Act is, we've had the opportunity to engage local communities consistently throughout this process: businesses, residents, people who are profoundly attached to the land. And as a consequence, the local communities have huge buy-in into these things and are absolutely confident that not only is it going to be a real economic spur in these areas, but it's also going to be able to preserve everything that they love about the places where they live.

So you guys have done a great job. I'm very proud.

And with that, I'm going to start signing some of these things.

[*At this point, the President signed the first proclamation.*]

All right, there we go. That's for the Basin and Range.

[*The President signed the second proclamation.*]

That's for Berryessa Snow Mountain.

[*The President signed the third proclamation.*]

There you go. That's for Waco.

Thank you so much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:02 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Proclamations 9297, 9298, and 9299 are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the 20th Anniversary of the Srebrenica Genocide
July 10, 2015

On July 11, we join people of all faiths and nationalities in commemorating the Srebrenica genocide. We mourn the loss of its more than 8,000 victims, and we honor the memory of those only now being laid to rest and all those still missing.

Twenty years ago, Srebrenica was overrun. In the genocide that followed, brothers, sons, husbands, and fathers were torn from their families. They were savagely murdered in the largest massacre in Europe in a half-century. We can offer no solace that fully addresses the pain borne by the victims' families. But we must look back at Srebrenica with clear eyes, commemorate the tragedy, and learn from it.

Only by fully acknowledging the past can we achieve a future of true and lasting reconciliation. Only by holding the perpetrators of the genocide to account can we offer some measure of justice to help heal their loved ones. And only by calling evil by its name can we find the strength to overcome it.

As we approach the 20th anniversary of the Dayton Accords, we recall that the tragedy of Srebrenica helped mobilize the international community to halt the slaughter of civilians and to finally end the war. Today the United States stands committed to joining with our Balkan partners to continue helping heal the wounds of the past. May we together honor the victims of Srebrenica and their loved ones by building a future in which all the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Balkans live together in peace.

The President's Weekly Address
July 11, 2015

Hi, everybody. It's our job as citizens to make sure we keep pushing this country we love towards our most cherished ideals: that all of us are created equal, all of us deserve an equal shot. This week, my administration took new steps to bring us closer to that goal.

Almost 50 years ago, Republicans and Democrats in Congress came together to pass the Fair Housing Act. It's a law that says landlords can't turn away tenants solely because of their race, religion, sex, national origin, or disability. And it made a difference in this country.

Still, the work of the Fair Housing Act remains unfinished. Just a few weeks ago, the Supreme Court ruled that policies segregating minorities in poor neighborhoods, even unintentionally, are against the law. The Court recognized what many people know to be true from their own lives: that too often, where people live determines what opportunities they have in life.

In some cities, kids living just blocks apart lead incredibly different lives. They go to different schools, play in different parks, shop in different stores, walk down different streets. And often, the quality of those schools and the safety of those parks and streets are far from equal, which means those kids aren't getting an equal shot in life.

That runs against the values we hold dear as Americans. In this country, of all countries, a person's Zip Code shouldn't decide their destiny. We don't guarantee equal outcomes, but we do strive to guarantee an equal shot at opportunity, in every neighborhood, for every American.

Now, the Fair Housing Act also says that this isn't the responsibility of a landlord alone; local governments have a role to play too. That's why, this week, my administration announced that we'll make it easier for communities to implement this law. We're using data on housing and neighborhood conditions to help cities identify the areas that need the most help. We're doing more to help communities meet their own goals. Plus, by opening up this data to everybody, everyone in a

community—not just elected officials—can weigh in. If you want a bus stop added near your home or more affordable housing nearby, now you'll have the data you need to make your case.

These actions won't make every community perfect. That's something we all have to strive for in our own lives. But they will help make our communities stronger and more vibrant. They'll help keep this a country where kids from every background can grow up knowing that no matter who you are, what you look like, or where you live, you can write your own story.

That's the America I love, and it's the America I'll keep fighting for. Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:05 p.m. on July 10 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on July 11. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 10, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on July 11.

Remarks at the White House Conference on Aging
July 13, 2015

The President. Hello, everybody. Thank you so much. Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. Welcome to the White House Conference on Aging, everybody. And I—please give Vicki a big round of applause for the outstanding work she's doing to help women and families prepare for retirement.

I want to thank the Members of Congress who are here, those in my administration who've been working on this issue. I want to especially point out one of my favorite former Members of Congress, a legend who's here today, John Dingell. John, thank you.

John was elected to Congress when he was just 29, an overachiever. [*Laughter*] Ten years later, he presided over the House Chamber for the vote to pass Medicare into law, an achievement for which he and his father can take some credit. Last week, John turned 89, so we want to wish John a happy birthday. He's been a retiree for 6 months, but he's keeping busy; just check out his Twitter feed if you don't believe me. [*Laughter*] So he's still got some pretty strong opinions.

It is wonderful to be here with all of you. Many of you have devoted your careers to advocating for older Americans. You understand the whole terrain: not just the challenges, but also the opportunities; not only the questions we're asking today, but the questions that we have to start thinking about for tomorrow. And because this conference takes place just once a decade, we've got to make it count.

So one of the best measures of a country is how it treats its older citizens. And by that measure, the United States has a lot to be proud of. Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security are some of our greatest triumphs as a nation. When Social Security was signed into law, far too many seniors were living in poverty. When Medicare was created, only a little more than half of all seniors had some form of insurance. Before Medicaid came along, families often had no help paying for nursing home costs. Today, the number of seniors in poverty has fallen dramatically. Every American over 65 has access to affordable health care. And by the way, since the Affordable Care Act was signed into law, the uninsured rate for all Americans has fallen by about one-third. Just thought I'd mention that.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. That was pretty good. [*Laughter*]

Together, we declared that every citizen of this country deserves a basic measure of security and dignity. And that choice saved millions upon millions of our people from poverty, allowed them to live longer and better lives. So we've got to be proud of that. These American endeavors didn't just make our country better, it reaffirmed our greatness as a country. And it's hard to find a single American whose live—life hasn't been enriched by these covenants in some fashion.

My grandmother was a fiercely independent woman. She helped to raise me. She didn't

have a college degree. She worked her way up, working on bomber assembly lines—Rosie the Riveter—during the war, and then went on, got a job as a secretary, and then kept on working her way up until she was vice president of a local bank. And after my grandfather died, she chose to live independently. And Medicare and Social Security allowed her to make that choice.

She had the confidence that, having worked hard, played by the rules, she was rewarded with a safe foundation for retirement and she could not fall through those cracks. And that was a promise this country made to her and all its citizens. And as a grateful grandson—who happens to be President—this is a promise I'm going to make sure we're going to keep for future generations. We've got to make sure that it's there for people who are working today.

But we're going to have work for it. We have to work to do more to ensure that every older American has the resources and the support that they need to thrive. That challenge—protecting our seniors, dealing with the rising costs of an aging generation, ensuring we have enough homecare workers looking out for our family members, maximizing the contributions that older Americans can make to our country—these challenges are just becoming more urgent.

And here's why. When we won World War II, everyone came home and had babies. [*Laughter*] I mean, not literally everyone, but a lot of people had babies. [*Laughter*] And now, each and every day, almost 10,000 of those babies turn 65 years old. So more than 250,000 Americans turn 65 every month. They're living longer, and they're living healthier. We're seeing people break athletic records in their sixties. [*Laughter*]

Diana Nyad is here today, by the way. You do not want to race her in anything. So the—[*laughter*]—arguably the toughest justice on the Supreme Court is the oldest: Ruth Bader Ginsburg, also known as the Notorious R.B.G. [*Laughter*] She's tough.

In just about every field, Americans who once might have been dismissed as out of touch or past their primes are making vital contributions in every field. And all of us, as a consequence, are able to raise our own ambitions about what we hope to achieve in our golden years. And since I'm living out dog years here in the Presidency—[*laughter*]—it's—this is something I'm paying a lot of attention to. [*Laughter*] Look at this hair. [*Laughter*] Although, I do have hair. [*Laughter*]

Rep. Joseph Crowley. Thanks a lot!

The President. Crowley was laughing a little bit too much over here. [*Laughter*]

So, since these golden years are coming pretty fast, I want to make sure that we briefly focus on what we've done to strengthen already Medicare and take a longer look at what we have to do to strengthen retirement even more.

And now, we're often told that Medicare and Social Security are in crisis. We hear that all the time. And usually, that's used as an excuse to try to cut spending on those bedrock programs. But here's the truth. Medicare and Social Security are not in crisis, nor have they kept us from cutting our deficits by two-thirds since I took office. [*Laughter*] Both programs are facing challenges because of the demographic trends I just talked about. And for Medicare, that means we've got to keep slowing the growth of health care costs and keep building on the progress we've already made in the past few years.

Since I signed the Affordable Care Act—also known as Obamacare—[*laughter*]. The—since we signed the ACA into law, we've extended the life of the Medicare Trust Fund by 13 years. We're moving Medicare towards payment models that require quality of care instead of quantity of care as the measure of what you get paid, creating a different set of incentives. And that's something that will keep older Americans healthy and Medicare healthy as well. What's more, this law has saved over 9 million people on Medicare, currently, more than $15 billion on their prescriptions.

Now, that doesn't get a lot of notice, but I want everybody to understand: Built into the Affordable Care Act, 9 million seniors have gotten significant discounts on their prescription drugs. They don't always know that it's

because of Obamacare, but that's why they've been paying cheaper drug prices. It's also given nearly 40 million people on Medicare free preventive health services. And we've expanded the options for home- and community-based services offered by Medicaid, which means that more older Americans are able to make the same choice that my grandmother did and live independently.

So those are some areas we've made progress. And Sylvia Burwell, who's here, our Secretary of Health and Human Services, I'm sure at some point during this conference will be talking about additional steps that we need to be taking to further improve a delivery system.

And understand, the goal here is not to cut back on services. The goal is to make sure that you're getting more of the services that you need, less of the services you don't, so you've got more money left over to do even more stuff that you need to keep you healthy and active and thriving. Because we have too much waste in the system that's not benefiting patients, but oftentimes, just has to do with a really inefficient system or, in some cases, works really well for providers, but doesn't work well for the consumer.

Now, even as we're dealing with the health care side, we also know that too many older Americans leave the workforce without having saved enough for a dignified retirement. And it's not as if they haven't tried. I mean, Vicki touched on this issue. There are a lot of folks out here who work really, really hard, but at the end of the day just still don't have enough of a nest egg. In today's economy, preparing for retirement has gotten tougher.

First of all, most workers don't have a traditional pension, what we used to understand as a defined benefit pension where you were guaranteed a certain amount every year once you retired. A Social Security check on its own oftentimes is not enough. And even though, as a consequence of some of the steps that we took, we pulled ourselves out of a terrible financial crisis and the stock market has now doubled since I took office, which means that it's replenished the 401(k)s for millions of families—[*applause*]—so that's been important for millions of families across the country, but a lot of people don't have any kind of retirement account at all.

So we're going to have to work hard to deal with these issues. Number one, we have to keep Social Security strong, protecting its future solvency. And I think there are ways, creative ways that people are talking about to protect its future solvency, but also strengthen retirement security for our most vulnerable neighbors. So that's step number one.

Step number two: For Americans who are doing the hard work of saving for retirement, let's make sure that they get a fair deal. Earlier this year, I announced new steps we're taking to protect Americans by cracking down on conflicts of interest in retirement advice. The goal here is to put an end to Wall Street brokers who benefit from backdoor payments or hidden fees at the expense of their clients. If they are advising you on how to save your money, they should be looking out for you, not for somebody who's selling a product that may not be best for you. And for the many brokers out there who are doing the right thing, this rule levels the playing field for them and their customers. The notion here is, is we want to make sure responsibility is rewarded and not exploited. So there's a consumer protection element to this whole thing.

Number three, we've got to make it easier for people to save for retirement. And today I'm pleased to announce an important step that we're taking to do just that. Right now about one-third of American workers do not have access to a retirement plan at work—one-third. That's why every budget request I've submitted since taking office has included a commonsense proposal to automatically enroll workers without access to a workplace retirement plan in an IRA, which would provide an additional 30 million Americans with access to a retirement plan at work.

Now, unfortunately, Congress has repeatedly failed to act on this idea. The good news is, States are stepping up, just like they're stepping up in other areas where Congress is not doing its work, like raising the minimum wage or making paid sick leave available for working

families. So, so far, a handful of States have passed laws to create new ways for people without a workplace plan to save for retirement. And more than 20 States are thinking about doing the same.

We want to do everything we can to encourage more States to take this step. So I've called on the Department of Labor and Tom Perez to propose a set of rules by the end of the year to provide a clear path forward for States to create retirement savings programs. And if every State did this, tens of millions more Americans could save for retirement at work.

But I just—I want to emphasize this point. It is perverse that in this country, it is just easier to save if you've already got money. [*Laughter*] And I'm talking about not just the fact that you've got money to save, I'm talking about just the mechanics, the mechanisms of being able to save and then take advantage of the tax benefits of savings. So, if we can just make sure that everybody, even if your employer doesn't provide those mechanisms, you still have a way of accessing it, every dollar you put in, that's going to be a dollar that also then benefits from the same kinds of tax advantages that somebody with a million dollars is able to take advantage of all the time.

And that's just fair. That's only fair. And that's all we're trying to do here, is make sure that if you're working hard out there, even if you're making—not making goo-gobs of money and don't have fancy financial advisers and all that, that you can still put away a little nest egg so that you're protected when you get older.

So this is just one of a number of steps that we're going to be taking to improve the lives of older Americans. As many of you know, over the past year, we've held regional forums with AARP across the country, heard lots of ideas from people, including folks in this room, about how we can make things better, especially for families and caregivers. So we're going to be moving ahead with several of the ideas that you've given us.

For example, we're going to make it easier for folks who are homebound to get nutritional assistance. We're going to update quality and safety requirements for thousands of nursing homes, the first major overhaul in nearly 25 years. We're going to train more prosecutors in how to combat elder abuse. We're going to work with Congress to reauthorize the Older Americans Act, because we know it will provide critical support to families and communities.

We're going to help Federal workers and their supervisors better understand how our policies on workplace flexibility can support employees who are also caregivers to aging parents. That's important. And I'm going to keep fighting to make family leave and workplace flexibility available to every American, no matter where they work. It's the right thing to do.

Every study shows that the kind of workplace flexibility we're talking about isn't just good for the employees; ultimately, it ends up being good for the employers, because you get more loyal, more productive employees with less turnover. And it's the right thing to do. And with the technologies that we have today, there's no reason why we can't make this happen.

So this year, we mark the 80th anniversary of Social Security. We mark the 50th anniversary of Medicare. We've grown so accustomed to these programs being a part of American life—these bedrock, foundation stones of our society—sometimes, it's easy to forget how revolutionary they were at the time. They were hard to get done. When FDR tried to pass Social Security, critics called it "socialism." When President Kennedy and President Johnson—and the Dingells—worked to create Medicare, cynics raised the alarm about Government takeover of health care. Now we've got signs saying, "Get your Government hands off of my Medicare." [*Laughter*]

The point is, change has always been hard. Detractors always are trying to maximize people's fear of the unknown. But ultimately, hope triumphs over fear. We choose to do big things here in America. Like I said a couple weeks back, three generations ago, we chose to end the era where seniors were left to languish in poverty. Two generations ago, we chose to end an age when Americans in their golden years didn't have the guarantee of health care. This generation, we chose to go even further, and

now health care in America is more affordable and available than ever before.

In this anniversary of those incredible achievements, we need to recommit ourselves to finishing the work that earlier generations began—make sure this is a country that remains one where no matter who you are or where you started off, you're treated with dignity, your hard work is rewarded, your contributions are valued, you have a shot to achieve your dreams whatever your age.

That's the America we're all working for. And I'm proud to work alongside you. Thank you so much. Congratulations. Have a wonderful conference. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:12 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Vickie Elisa, board president, Mothers' Voices Georgia, who introduced the President; and long-distance swimmer Diana Nyad.

Remarks on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action To Prevent Iran From Obtaining a Nuclear Weapon
July 14, 2015

Today, after 2 years of negotiations, the United States, together with our international partners, has achieved something that decades of animosity has not: a comprehensive, long-term deal with Iran that will prevent it from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

This deal demonstrates that American diplomacy can bring about real and meaningful change, change that makes our country and the world safer and more secure. This deal is also in line with a tradition of American leadership. It's now more than 50 years since President Kennedy stood before the American people and said, "Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate." He was speaking then about the need for discussions between the United States and the Soviet Union, which led to efforts to restrict the spread of nuclear weapons.

In those days, the risk was a catastrophic nuclear war between two superpowers. In our time, the risk is that nuclear weapons will spread to more and more countries, particularly in the Middle East, the most volatile region in our world.

Today, because America negotiated from a position of strength and principle, we have stopped the spread of nuclear weapons in this region. Because of this deal, the international community will be able to verify that the Islamic Republic of Iran will not develop a nuclear weapon.

This deal meets every single one of the bottom lines that we established when we achieved a framework earlier this spring. Every pathway to a nuclear weapon is cut off. And the inspection and transparency regime necessary to verify that objective will be put in place. Because of this deal, Iran will not produce the highly enriched uranium and weapons-grade plutonium that form the raw materials necessary for a nuclear bomb.

Because of this deal, Iran will remove two-thirds of its installed centrifuges—the machines necessary to produce highly enriched uranium for a bomb—and store them under constant international supervision. Iran will not use its advanced centrifuges to produce enriched uranium for the next decade. Iran will also get rid of 98 percent of its stockpile of enriched uranium.

To put that in perspective, Iran currently has a stockpile that could produce up to 10 nuclear weapons. Because of this deal, that stockpile will be reduced to a fraction of what would be required for a single weapon. This stockpile limitation will last for 15 years.

Because of this deal, Iran will modify the core of its reactor in Arak so that it will not produce weapons-grade plutonium. And it has agreed to ship the spent fuel from the reactor out of the country for the lifetime of the reactor. For at least the next 15 years, Iran will not build any new heavy-water reactors.

Because of this deal, we will, for the first time, be in a position to verify all of these commitments. That means this deal is not built on trust, it is built on verification. Inspectors will have 24/7 access to Iran's key nuclear facilities.

Iran [Inspectors]* will have access to Iran's entire nuclear supply chain: its uranium mines and mills, its conversion facility, and its centrifuge manufacturing and storage facilities. This ensures that Iran will not be able to divert materials from known facilities to covert ones. Some of these transparency measures will be in place for 25 years.

Because of this deal, inspectors will also be able to access any suspicious location. Put simply, the organization responsible for the inspections, the IAEA, will have access where necessary, when necessary. That arrangement is permanent. And the IAEA has also reached an agreement with Iran to get access that it needs to complete its investigation into the possible military dimensions of Iran's past nuclear research.

Finally, Iran is permanently prohibited from pursuing a nuclear weapon under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which provided the basis for the international community's efforts to apply pressure on Iran.

As Iran takes steps to implement this deal, it will receive relief from the sanctions that we put in place because of Iran's nuclear program, both America's own sanctions and sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council. This relief will be phased in. Iran must complete key nuclear steps before it begins to receive new sanctions relief. And over the course of the next decade, Iran must abide by the deal before additional sanctions are lifted, including 5 years for restrictions related to arms and 8 years for restrictions related to ballistic missiles.

All of this will be memorialized and endorsed in a new United Nations Security Council resolution. And if Iran violates the deal, all of these sanctions will snap back into place. So there's a very clear incentive for Iran to follow through, and there are very real consequences for a violation.

That's the deal. It has the full backing of the international community. Congress will now have an opportunity to review the details, and my administration stands ready to provide extensive briefings on how this will move forward.

As the American people and Congress review the deal, it will be important to consider the alternative. Consider what happens in a world without this deal. Without this deal, there is no scenario where the world joins us in sanctioning Iran until it completely dismantles its nuclear program. Nothing we know about the Iranian Government suggests that it would simply capitulate under that kind of pressure. And the world would not support an effort to permanently sanction Iran into submission. We put sanctions in place to get a diplomatic resolution, and that is what we have done.

Without this deal, there would be no agreed-upon limitations for the Iranian nuclear program. Iran could produce, operate, and test more and more centrifuges. Iran could fuel a reactor capable of producing plutonium for a bomb. And we would not have any of the inspections that allow us to detect a covert nuclear weapons program. In other words, no deal means no lasting constraints on Iran's nuclear program.

Such a scenario would make it more likely that other countries in the region would feel compelled to pursue their own nuclear programs, threatening a nuclear arms race in the most volatile region of the world. It would also present the United States with fewer and less effective options to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

I have been President and Commander in Chief for over 6 years now. Time and again, I have faced decisions about whether or not to use military force. It's the gravest decision that any President has to make. Many times, in multiple countries, I have decided to use force. And I will never hesitate to do so when it is in our national security interest. I strongly believe

* White House correction.

that our national security interest now depends upon preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, which means that without a diplomatic resolution, either I or a future U.S. President would face a decision about whether or not to allow Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon or whether to use our military to stop it.

Put simply, no deal means a greater chance of more war in the Middle East. Moreover, we give nothing up by testing whether or not this problem can be solved peacefully. If, in a worst-case scenario, Iran violates the deal, the same options that are available to me today will be available to any U.S. President in the future. And I have no doubt that 10 or 15 years from now, the person who holds this office will be in a far stronger position with Iran further away from a weapon and with the inspections and transparency that allow us to monitor the Iranian program.

For this reason, I believe it would be irresponsible to walk away from this deal. But on such a tough issue, it is important that the American people and their representatives in Congress get a full opportunity to review the deal. After all, the details matter. And we've had some of the finest nuclear scientists in the world working through those details. And we're dealing with a country, Iran, that has been a sworn adversary of the United States for over 35 years. So I welcome a robust debate in Congress on this issue, and I welcome scrutiny of the details of this agreement.

But I will remind Congress that you don't make deals like this with your friends. We negotiated arms control agreements with the Soviet Union when that nation was committed to our destruction. And those agreements ultimately made us safer. I am confident that this deal will meet the national security interests of the United States and our allies. So I will veto any legislation that prevents the successful implementation of this deal.

We do not have to accept an inevitable spiral into conflict, and we certainly shouldn't seek it. And precisely because the stakes are so high, this is not the time for politics or posturing. Tough talk from Washington does not solve problems. Hard-nosed diplomacy, leadership that has united the world's major powers, offers a more effective way to verify that Iran is not pursuing a nuclear weapon.

Now, that doesn't mean that this deal will resolve all of our differences with Iran. We share the concerns expressed by many of our friends in the Middle East, including Israel and the Gulf States, about Iran's support for terrorism and its use of proxies to destabilize the region. But that is precisely why we are taking this step, because an Iran armed with a nuclear weapon would be far more destabilizing and far more dangerous to our friends and to the world.

Meanwhile, we will maintain our own sanctions related to Iran's support for terrorism, its ballistic missile program, and its human rights violations. We will continue our unprecedented efforts to strengthen Israel's security, efforts that go beyond what any American administration has done before. And we will continue the work we began at Camp David to elevate our partnership with the Gulf States to strengthen their capabilities to counter threats from Iran or terrorist groups like ISIL.

However, I believe that we must continue to test whether or not this region, which has known so much suffering, so much bloodshed, can move in a different direction.

Time and again, I have made clear to the Iranian people that we will always be open to engagement on the basis of mutual interests and mutual respect. Our differences are real and the difficult history between our nations cannot be ignored. But it is possible to change. The path of violence and rigid ideology, a foreign policy based on threats to attack your neighbors or eradicate Israel—that's a dead end. A different path, one of tolerance and peaceful resolution of conflict, leads to more integration into the global economy, more engagement with the international community, and the ability of the Iranian people to prosper and thrive.

This deal offers an opportunity to move in a new direction. We should seize it.

We have come a long way to reach this point: decades of an Iranian nuclear program, many years of sanctions, and many months of

intense negotiation. Today I want to thank the Members of Congress from both parties who helped us put in place the sanctions that have proven so effective, as well as the other countries who joined us in that effort.

I want to thank our negotiating partners—the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, China, as well as the European Union—for our unity in this effort, which showed that the world can do remarkable things when we share a vision of peacefully addressing conflicts. We showed what we can do when we do not split apart.

And finally, I want to thank the American negotiating team. We had a team of experts working for several weeks straight on this, including our Secretary of Energy, Ernie Moniz. And I want to particularly thank John Kerry, our Secretary of State, who began his service to this country more than four decades ago when he put on our uniform and went off to war. He's now making this country safer through his commitment to strong, principled American diplomacy.

History shows that America must lead not just with our might, but with our principles. It shows we are stronger not when we are alone, but when we bring the world together. Today's announcement marks one more chapter in this pursuit of a safer and more helpful and more hopeful world.

Thank you. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:02 a.m. on the State Floor at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks at the NAACP Annual Convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
July 14, 2015

The President. Hello, NAACP! Ah, it's good to be back. How you all doing today? You doing fine?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. You're doing fine? You look fine. All right, everybody have a seat. I've got some stuff to say. I've got some stuff to say.

Audience members. We love you!

The President. I love you back. You know that.

So, see, now, whenever people have, like, little signs, you've all got to write it bigger, because I'm getting old now. [*Laughter*] And I like that picture of me. That's very nice. Thank you.

Let's get something out of the way up front. I am not singing today. [*Laughter*] Not singing. Although I will say your board sang to me as I came in for the photograph. [*Laughter*] So I know there's some good voices in the auditorium.

Let me also say what everybody knows, but doesn't always want to say out loud: You all would rather have Michelle here. [*Laughter*] I understand. I don't blame you. But I will do my best to fill her shoes. [*Laughter*] And she sends everybody her love. And Malia and Sasha say hi as well. And—[*applause*].

I want to thank your chair, Roslyn Brock. I want to thank your president, Cornell Brooks. I want to thank your Governor, Tom Wolf, who's doing outstanding work and was here. The mayor of Philadelphia, Michael Nutter, who's been a great friend and ally. Governor Dan Malloy of Connecticut, who's here today. And some outstanding Members of Congress who are here. I want to just say thank you to all of you for your love, your—for your support, but most importantly, for the work that you are doing in your communities all across the country every single day.

It's not always received with a lot of fanfare. Sometimes, it's lonely work; sometimes, it's hard work; sometimes, it's frustrating work. But it's necessary work. And it builds on a tradition of this organization that reshaped the Nation.

For 106 years, the NAACP has worked to close the gaps between the words of our founding that we are all created equal, endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights—those words—trying to match those with the realities that we live each and every day.

In your first century, this organization stood up to lynching and Jim Crow and segregation; helped to shepherd a Civil Rights Act and a Voting Rights Act. I would not be here, and so many others would not be here, without the NAACP.

In your second century, we've worked together to give more of our children a shot at a quality education, to help more families rise up out of poverty, to protect future generations from environmental damage, to create fair housing, to help more workers find the purpose of a good job. And together, we've made real progress, including a "My Brother's Keeper" initiative to give more young people a fair shot in life; including the passage of a law that declares health care is not a privilege for the few, but a right for all of us.

We've made progress, but our work is not done. By just about every measure, the life chances for Black and Hispanic youths still lag far behind those of their White peers. Our kids, America's children, so often are isolated, without hope, less likely to graduate from high school, less likely to earn a college degree, less likely to be employed, less likely to have health insurance, less likely to own a home.

And part of this is a legacy of hundreds of years of slavery and segregation and structural inequalities that compounded over generations. It did not happen by accident. Partly, it's a result of continuing, if sometimes more subtle, bigotry, whether in who gets called back for a job interview, or who gets suspended from school, or what neighborhood you are able to rent an apartment in, which, by the way, is why our recent initiative to strengthen the awareness and effectiveness of fair housing laws is so important. So we can't be satisfied, are not satisfied, until the opportunity gap is closed for everybody in America. Everybody.

But today I want to focus on one aspect of American life that remains particularly skewed by race and by wealth, a source of inequity that has ripple effects on families and on communities and ultimately on our Nation, and that is our criminal justice system.

Now, this is not a new topic. I know sometimes folks discover these things like they just happened. There's a long history of inequity in the criminal justice system in America. When I was in the State legislature in Illinois, we worked to make sure that we had videotaping of interrogations because there were some problems there. We set up racial profiling laws to prevent the kind of bias in traffic stops that too many people experience. Since my first campaign, I've talked about how, in too many cases, our criminal justice system ends up being a pipeline from underfunded, inadequate schools to overcrowded jails.

What has changed, though, is that, in recent years, the eyes of more Americans have been opened to this truth. Partly because of cameras—[*laughter*]—partly because of tragedy, partly because the statistics cannot be ignored, we can't close our eyes anymore. And the good news—and this is truly good news—is that good people of all political persuasions are starting to think we need to do something about this.

So let's look at the statistics. The United States is home to 5 percent of the world's population, but 25 percent of the world's prisoners. Think about that. Our incarceration rate is four times higher than China's. We keep more people behind bars than the top 35 European countries combined. And it hasn't always been the case, this huge explosion in incarceration rates. In 1980, there were 500,000 people behind bars in America—half a million people in 1980. I was in college in 1980. Many of you were not born in 1980. That's okay. [*Laughter*] I remember 1980—500,000. Today, there are 2.2 million. It has quadrupled since 1980. Our prison population has doubled in the last two decades alone.

Now, we need to be honest: There are a lot of folks who belong in prison. If we're going to deal with this problem and the inequities involved, then we also have to speak honestly. There are some folks who need to be in jail. They may have had terrible things happen to them in their lives. We hold out the hope for redemption, but they've done some bad things.

Murderers, predators, rapists, gang leaders, drug kingpins—we need some of those folks behind bars. Our communities are safer thanks

to brave police officers and hard-working prosecutors who put those violent criminals in jail.

And the studies show that up to a certain point, tougher prosecutors and stiffer sentences for these violent offenders contributed to the decline in violent crime over the last few decades, although the science also indicates that you get a point of diminishing returns. But it is important for us to recognize that violence in our communities is serious and that historically, in fact, the African American community oftentimes was underpoliced rather than overpoliced. Folks were very interested in containing the African American community so it couldn't leave segregated areas, but within those areas, there wasn't enough police presence.

But here's the thing: Over the last few decades, we've also locked up more and more nonviolent drug offenders than ever before for longer than ever before. And that is the real reason our prison population is so high. In far too many cases, the punishment simply does not fit the crime. If you're a low-level drug dealer or you violate your parole, you owe some debt to society. You have to be held accountable and make amends. But you don't owe 20 years. [*Laughter*] You don't owe a life sentence. That's disproportionate to the price that should be paid.

And by the way, the taxpayers are picking up the tab for that price. Every year, we spend $80 billion to keep folks incarcerated—$80 billion. Now, just to put that in perspective, for $80 billion, we could have universal preschool for every 3-year-old and 4-year-old in America. That's what $80 billion buys. For $80 billion, we could double the salary of every high school teacher in America. For $80 billion, we could finance new roads and new bridges and new airports, job training programs, research and development. I'm—we're about to get in a big budget debate in Washington—what I couldn't do with $80 billion. [*Laughter*] It's a lot of money. For what we spend to keep everyone locked up for 1 year, we could eliminate tuition at every single one of our public colleges and universities.

As Republican Senator and Presidential candidate Rand Paul has said—[*laughter*]—no, and to his credit, he's been consistent on this issue—imprisoning large numbers of nonviolent drug offenders for long periods of time "costs the taxpayers money, without making them any safer."

Roughly one-third of the Justice Department's budget now goes toward incarceration—one-third. And there are outstanding public servants at our Justice Department, starting with our outstanding Attorney General, Loretta Lynch. And we've got some great prosecutors here today, and they do outstanding work—so many of them. But every dollar they have to spend keeping nonviolent drug offenders in prison is a dollar they can't spend going after drug kingpins or tracking down terrorists or hiring more police and giving them the resources that would allow them to do a more effective job community policing.

And then, of course, there are the costs that can't be measured in dollars and cents. Because the statistics on who gets incarcerated show that by a wide margin, it disproportionately impacts communities of color. African Americans and Latinos make up 30 percent of our population; they make up 60 percent of our inmates. About 1 in every 35 African American men, 1 in every 88 Latino men is serving time right now. Among White men, that number is 1 in 214.

The bottom line is, is that in too many places, Black boys and Black men, Latino boys and Latino men experience being treated differently under the law.

And I want to be clear: This is not just anecdote. This is not just barbershop talk. A growing body of research shows that people of color are more likely to be stopped, frisked, questioned, charged, detained. Americans—African Americans are more likely to be arrested. They are more likely to be sentenced to more time for the same crime. And one of the consequences of this is, around 1 million fathers are behind bars. Around one in nine African American kids has a parent in prison.

What is that doing to our communities? What's that doing to those children? Our

Nation is being robbed of men and women who could be workers and taxpayers, could be more actively involved in their children's lives, could be role models, could be community leaders, and right now they're locked up for a nonviolent offense.

So our criminal justice system isn't as smart as it should be. It's not keeping us as safe as it should be. It is not as fair as it should be. Mass incarceration makes our country worse off, and we need to do something about it.

But here's the good news.

Audience member. All right, good news.

The President. Good news. Don't get me preaching now. [*Laughter*] I am feeling more hopeful today because even now, when, let's face it, it seems like Republicans and Democrats cannot agree on anything—[*laughter*]—a lot of them agree on this. In fact, today, back in Washington, Republican Senators from Utah and Texas are joining Democratic Senators from New Jersey and Rhode Island to talk about how Congress can pass meaningful criminal justice reform this year. That's good news. [*Applause*] That is good news. Good news.

That doesn't happen very often. And it's not just Senators. This is a cause that's bringing people in both Houses of Congress together. It's created some unlikely bedfellows. You've got Van Jones and Newt Gingrich. [*Laughter*] You've got Americans for Tax Reform and the ACLU. You've got the NAACP and the Koch brothers. [*Laughter*] No, you've got to give them credit. You've got to call it like you see it. [*Laughter*] There are States from Texas and South Carolina to California and Connecticut who have acted to reduce their prison populations over the last 5 years and seen their crime rates fall. That's good news.

My administration has taken steps on our own to reduce our Federal prison population. So I signed a bill reducing the 100 and 1 sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine. I've commuted the sentences of dozens of people sentenced under old drug laws that we now recognize were unfair, and yesterday I announced that I'm commuting dozens more.

Under the leadership of Attorney General Eric Holder, now continued by Loretta Lynch, Federal prosecutors got what he called "Smart on Crime," which is refocusing efforts on the worst offenders, pursuing mandatory minimum sentences 20-percent less often than they did the year before. The idea is you don't always have to charge the max. To be a good prosecutor, you need to be proportionate. And it turns out that we're solving just as many cases and there are just as many plea bargains, and it's working. It's just that we've eliminated some of the excess.

And recently, something extraordinary happened. For the first time in 40 years, America's crime rate and incarceration rate both went down at the same time. That happened last year.

So there's some momentum building for reform. There's evidence mounting for why we need reform. And I want to spend the rest of my time just laying out some basic principles, some simple ideas for what reform should look like, because we're just at the beginning of this process and we need to make sure that we stay with it. And I'm going to focus on what happens in three places: in the community, in the courtroom, and in the cell block.

So I want to begin with the community because I believe crime is like any other epidemic: The best time to stop it is before it starts. And I'm going to go ahead and say what I've said a hundred times before or a thousand times before and what you've heard me say before, if we make investments early in our children, we will reduce the need to incarcerate those kids.

So one study found that for every dollar we invest in pre-K, we save at least twice that down the road in reduced crime. Getting a teenager a job for the summer costs a fraction of what it costs to lock him up for 15 years. Investing in our communities makes sense. It saves taxpayer money if we are consistent about it and if we recognize that every child deserve opportunity, not just some, not just our own.

What doesn't make sense is treating entire neighborhoods as little more than danger

zones where we just surround them. We ask police to go in there and do the tough job of trying to contain the hopelessness when we are not willing to make the investments to help lift those communities out of hopelessness. That's not just a police problem, that's a societal problem.

Places like West Philly or West Baltimore or Ferguson, Missouri—they're part of America too. They're not separate. They're part of America like anywhere else. The kids there are American kids, just like your kids and my kids. So we've got to make sure boys and girls in those communities are loved and cherished and supported and nurtured and invested in. And we have to have the same standards for those children as we have for our own children.

If you are a parent, you know that there are times where boys and girls are going to act out in school. And the question is, are we letting principals and parents deal with one set of kids and we call the police on another set of kids? That's not the right thing to do.

We've got to make sure our juvenile justice system remembers that kids are different. Don't just tag them as future criminals. Reach out to them as future citizens.

And even as we recognize that police officers do one of the toughest, bravest jobs around, and as we do everything in our power to keep those police officers safe on the job—I've talked about this—we have to restore trust between our police and some of the communities where they serve. And a good place to start is making sure communities around the country adopt the recommendations from the Task Force I set up that included law enforcement, but also included young people from New York and from Ferguson, and they were able to arrive at a consensus around things like better training, better data collection, to make sure that policing is more effective and more accountable, but is also more unbiased.

So these are steps in the community that will lead to fewer folks being arrested in the first place. Now, they won't eliminate crime entirely. There's going to be crime. And that's why the second place we need to change is in the courtroom.

For nonviolent drug crimes, we need to lower long mandatory minimum sentences or get rid of them entirely; give judges some discretion around nonviolent crimes so that, potentially, we can steer a young person who has made a mistake in a better direction.

We should pass a sentencing reform bill through Congress this year. We need to ask prosecutors to use their discretion to seek the best punishment, the one that's going to be most effective, instead of just the longest punishment. We should invest in alternatives to prison, like drug courts and treatment and probation programs, which ultimately can save taxpayers thousands of dollars per defendant each year.

Now, even if we're locking up fewer people, even if we are reforming sentencing guidelines, as I've said before, some criminals still deserve to go to jail. And as Republican Senator John Cornyn has reminded us, "virtually all of the people incarcerated in our prisons will eventually someday be released." And that's why the third place we need to reform is in the cell block.

So, on Thursday, I will be the first sitting President to visit a Federal prison. And I'm going to shine a spotlight on this issue, because while the people in our prisons have made some mistakes—and sometimes big mistakes—they are also Americans, and we have to make sure that as they do their time and pay back their debt to society that we are increasing the possibility that they can turn their lives around.

That doesn't mean that we will turn everybody's life around. That doesn't mean there aren't some hard cases. But it does mean that we want to be in a position in which if somebody in the midst of imprisonment recognizes the error of their ways, is in the process of reflecting about where they've been and where they should be going, we've got to make sure that they're in a position to make the turn.

And that's why we should not tolerate conditions in prison that have no place in any civilized country. We should not be tolerating overcrowding in prison. We should not be tolerating gang activity in prison. We should not

be tolerating rape in prison. And we shouldn't be making jokes about it in our popular culture. That's no joke. These things are unacceptable.

What's more, I've asked my Attorney General to start a review of the overuse of solitary confinement across American prisons. The social science shows that an environment like that is often more likely to make inmates more alienated, more hostile, potentially more violent. Do we really think it makes sense to lock so many people alone in tiny cells for 23 hours a day, for months, sometimes even years at a time? That is not going to make us safer. That's not going to make us stronger. And if those individuals are ultimately released, how are they ever going to adapt? It's not smart.

Our prisons should be a place where we can train people for skills that can help them find a job, not train them to become more hardened criminals.

And I—look, I don't want to pretend like this is all easy. But some places are doing better than others. Montgomery County, Maryland, put a job training center inside the prison walls to give folks a head start in thinking about what might you do otherwise than committing crime. That's a good idea.

Here's another good idea, one with bipartisan support in Congress: Let's reward prisoners with reduced sentences if they complete programs that make them less likely to commit a repeat offense. Let's invest in innovative new approaches to link former prisoners with employers, help them stay on track. Let's follow the growing number of our States and cities and private companies who've decided to "Ban the Box" on job applications so that former prisoners who have done their time and are now trying to get straight with society have a decent shot in a job interview. And if folks have served their time, and they've reentered society, they should be able to vote.

Communities that give our young people every shot at success, courts that are tough but fair, prisons that recognize eventually the majority will be released and so seek to prepare these returning citizens to grab that second chance, that's where we need to build.

But I want to add this. We can't ask our police or our prosecutors or our prison guards or our judges to bear the entire burden of containing and controlling problems that the rest of us are not facing up to and willing to do something about.

So yes, we have to stand up to those who are determined to slash investments in our communities at any cost: cutting preschool programs, cutting job training programs, cutting affordable housing programs, cutting community policing programs. That's shortsighted. Those investments make this country strong. We've got to invest in opportunity more than ever.

An African American man born roughly at 25 years ago has just a one-in-two chance of being employed today. More than one in three African American children are growing up in poverty. When America's unemployment rate was 9.5 percent, when I first came into office, as it was going up, we properly recognized, this is a crisis. Right now the unemployment rate among African Americans is 9.5 percent. What should we call that? It is a crisis. And we have to be just as concerned about continuing to lift up job opportunities for these young people.

So today I've been talking about the criminal justice system, but we have to recognize that it's not something we can view in isolation. Any system that allows us to turn a blind eye to hopelessness and despair, that's not a justice system, it is an injustice system. But that is an extension and a reflection of some broader decisions that we're making as a society. And that has to change. That has to change.

What the march—the marchers on Washington knew, what the marchers in Selma knew, what folks like Julian Bond knew, what the marchers in this room still know, is that justice is not only the absence of oppression, it is the presence of opportunity.

Justice is giving every child a shot at a great education no matter what Zip Code they're born into. Justice is giving everyone willing to work hard the chance at a good job with good wages, no matter what their name is, what their skin color is, where they live.

Fifty years after the Voting Rights Act, justice is protecting that right for every American. Justice is living up to the common creed that says, I am my brother's keeper and my sister's keeper. Justice is making sure every young person knows they are special and they are important and that their lives matter, not because they heard it in a hashtag, but because of the love they feel every single day; not just love from their parents, not just love from their neighborhood, but love from police, love from politicians, love from somebody who lives on the other side of the country, but says, that young person is still important to me. That's what justice is.

And in the American tradition and in the immigrant tradition of remaking ourselves, in the Christian tradition that says none of us is without sin and all of us need redemption, justice and redemption go hand in hand.

Right before I came out here, I met with four former prisoners, four ex-offenders. Two of them were African American, one of them was Latino, one of them was White. All of them had amazing stories. One of them dropped out of school when he was a young kid. Now he's making film about his experience in the prison system.

One of them served 10 years in prison, then got a job at Five Guys—which is a tasty burger—[*laughter*]—and they gave him an opportunity, and he rose up and became a general manager there and now is doing antiviolence work here in the community.

One of them, the young Latino man, he came out of prison and was given an opportunity to get trained on green jobs that are helping the environment, but also gave him a marketable skill. And he talked about how the way he's staying out of trouble is, he just keeps on thinking about his two daughters. And I could relate to that, because you don't want to disappoint your daughters. You don't want to disappoint those baby girls. And so he says, I go to work and I come home, and I grab that little baby and get a kiss, and that's keeping me focused.

And then, one of them, Jeff Copeland, was arrested six times before his 38th birthday. He was drinking, using drugs, racked up DUI after DUI, sentence after sentence. And he admits that the sentences he was getting for DUI weren't reflective of all the trouble he was causing, could have been worse. And Jeff spent so much time jogging in place in his cell that inmates nicknamed him the "Running Man." And he was literally going nowhere, running in place.

And then, somehow, Jeff started examining his life. And he said, "This isn't me." So he decided to hold himself accountable. He quit drinking. He went to AA. Met a recruiter from the reentry program at the Community College of Philadelphia, enrolled in classes once he was released, made sure to show up every day. Graduated summa cum laude with a 3.95 GPA. And this fall he'll graduate from Temple University with a major in criminal justice and a minor in social work. And he volunteers helping former inmates get their lives back on track.

And "it's sort of a cliché," he says, "but we can do anything." And just 2 years ago, the "Running Man" ran his first marathon, because he's going somewhere now. "You never look at crossing the finishing line," he says of his journey, "you attack it by putting one mile after the other. It takes steps." It takes steps. That's true for individuals. It's true for our Nation.

Sometimes, I get in debates about how to think about progress or the lack of progress when it comes to issues of race and inequality in America. And there are times where people say, "Oh, the President, he's too optimistic." Or "he's not talking enough about how bad things are." Oh, and let me tell you something, I see what happens. My heart breaks when I see families who are impacted. I spend time with those families and feel their grief. I see those young men in street corners and eventually in prisons, and I think to myself, they could be me; that the main difference between me and them is, I had a more forgiving environment so that when I slipped up, when I made a mistake, I had a second chance. And they've got no margin for error.

I know how hard things are for a lot of folks. But I also know that it takes steps. And if we

have the courage to take that first step, then we take a second step. And if we have the courage to take the second step, then suddenly, we've taken 10 steps. The next thing you know, you've taken 100 steps. And that's true not just for us as individuals, but that is true for us as a nation.

We are not perfect, but we have the capacity to be more perfect. Mile after mile; step after step. And they pile up one after the other and pretty soon that finish line starts getting into sight, and we are not where we were. We're in a better place because we had the courage to move forward. So we cannot ignore the problems that we have, but we can't stop running the race. That's how you win the race. That's how you fix a broken system. That's how you change a country.

The NAACP understands that. Think about the race that you have run. Think about the race ahead. If we keep taking steps toward a more perfect Union, and close the gaps between who we are and who we want to be, America will move forward. There's nothing we can't do.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:54 p.m. at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to former White House Council on Environmental Quality Special Adviser for Green Jobs Anthony K. "Van" Jones; former Speaker of the House of Representatives Newton L. Gingrich; Charles G. Koch, chief executive officer and chairman of the board, and David H. Koch, executive vice president, Koch Industries, Inc.; Sens. Michael S. Lee, Cory A. Booker, and Sheldon Whitehouse; H. Julian Bond, chairman emeritus, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; filmmaker El Sawyer; Robert Warner, program director, Philadelphia Cease-Fire–Cure Violence; and Tara Timberman, founder and coordinator, Fox Rothchild Center for Law and Society's Reentry Support Project at the Community College of Philadelphia.

The President's News Conference
July 15, 2015

The President. Good afternoon, everybody. Yesterday was a historic day. The comprehensive, long-term deal that we achieved with our allies and partners to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon represents a powerful display of American leadership and diplomacy. It shows what we can accomplish when we lead from a position of strength and a position of principle, when we unite the international community around a shared vision and we resolve to solve problems peacefully.

As I said yesterday, it's important for the American people and Congress to get a full opportunity to review this deal. And that process is now underway. I've already reached out to leaders in Congress on both sides of the aisle. My national security team has begun offering extensive briefings. I expect the debate to be robust, and that's how it should be. This is an important issue. Our national security policies are stronger and more effective when they are subject to the scrutiny and transparency that democracy demands.

And as I said yesterday, the details of this deal matter very much. That's why our team worked so hard for so long to get the details right. At the same time, as this debate unfolds, I hope we don't lose sight of the larger picture, the opportunity that this agreement represents. As we go forward, it's important for everybody to remember the alternative and the fundamental choice that this moment represents.

With this deal, we cut off every single one of Iran's pathways to a nuclear program—a nuclear weapons program, and Iran's nuclear program will be under severe limits for many years. Without a deal, those pathways remain open; there would be no limits to Iran's nucle-

ar program, and Iran could move closer to a nuclear bomb.

With this deal, we gain unprecedented, around-the-clock monitoring of Iran's key nuclear facilities and the most comprehensive and intrusive inspection and verification regime ever negotiated. Without a deal, those inspections go away, and we lose the ability to closely monitor Iran's program and detect any covert nuclear weapons program.

With this deal, if Iran violates its commitments, there will be real consequences. Nuclear-related sanctions that have helped to cripple the Iranian economy will snap back into place. Without a deal, the international sanctions regime will unravel, with little ability to reimpose them.

With this deal, we have the possibility of peacefully resolving a major threat to regional and international security. Without a deal, we risk even more war in the Middle East, and other countries in the region would feel compelled to pursue their own nuclear programs, threatening a nuclear arms race in the most volatile region in the world.

As I said yesterday, even with this deal, we will continue to have profound differences with Iran: its support of terrorism, its use of proxies to destabilize parts of the Middle East. Therefore, the multilateral arms embargo on Iran will remain in place for an additional 5 years, and restrictions on ballistic missile technology will remain for 8 years. In addition, the United States will maintain our own sanctions related to Iran's support for terrorism, its ballistic missile program, its human rights violations. And we'll continue our unprecedented security cooperation with Israel and continue to deepen our partnerships with the Gulf States.

But the bottom line is this: This nuclear deal meets the national security interests of the United States and our allies. It prevents the most serious threat, Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon, which would only make the other problems that Iran may cause even worse. That's why this deal makes our country and the world safer and more secure. It's why the alternative—no limits on Iran's nuclear program, no inspections, an Iran that's closer to a nuclear weapon, the risk of regional nuclear arms race, and a greater risk of war—all that would endanger our security. That's the choice that we face. If we don't choose wisely, I believe future generations will judge us harshly for letting this moment slip away.

And no one suggests that this deal resolves all the threats that Iran poses to its neighbors or the world. Moreover, realizing the promise of this deal will require many years of implementation and hard work. It will require vigilance and execution. But this deal is our best means of assuring that Iran does not get a nuclear weapon. And from the start, that has been my number-one priority, our number-one priority. We've got a historic chance to pursue a safer and more secure world, an opportunity that may not come again in our lifetimes. And as President and as Commander in Chief, I am determined to seize that opportunity.

So, with that, I'm going to take some questions. And let me see who I'm starting off with. Here you go. I've got it. [*Laughter*]

Andrew Beatty, AFP.

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action To Prevent Iran From Obtaining a Nuclear Weapon/Iran-U.S. Relations

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Yesterday you said the deal offered a chance at a new direction in relations with Iran. And what steps will you take to enable a more moderate Iran? And does this deal allow you to more forcefully counter Iran's destabilizing actions in the region, quite aside from the nuclear question? Thank you.

The President. Andrew, if you don't mind, just because I suspect that there's going to be a common set of questions that are touched on, I promise I will get to your question, but I want to start off just by stepping back and reminding folks of what is at stake here. And I already did in my opening statement, but I just want to reiterate it because I've heard already some of the objections to the deal.

The starting premise of our strategy with respect to Iran has been that it would be a grave

threat to the United States and to our allies if they obtained a nuclear weapon. And so everything that we've done over the last 6½ years has been designed to make sure that we address that number-one priority. That's what the sanctions regime was all about. That's how we were able to mobilize the international community, including some folks that we are not particularly close to, to abide by these sanctions. That's how these crippling sanctions came about, was because we were able to gain global consensus that Iran having a nuclear weapon would be a problem for everybody.

That's the reason that Iran's accounts got frozen and they were not able to get money for the oil sales that they've made. That's the reason that they had problems operating with respect to international commerce, because we built that international consensus around this very specific, narrow, but profound issue: the possibility of Iran getting a nuclear weapon.

And by the way, that was not simply my priority. If you look back at all the debates that have taken place over the last 5, 6 years, this has been a Democratic priority, this has been a Republican priority, this has been Prime Minister Netanyahu's priority, it has been our Gulf allies' priority—is making sure Iran does not get a nuclear weapon.

The deal negotiated by John Kerry, Wendy Sherman, Ernie Moniz, our allies, our partners, the P5-plus-1 achieves that goal. It achieves our top priority: making sure that Iran does not get a nuclear weapon. But we have always recognized that even if Iran doesn't get a nuclear weapon, Iran still poses challenges to our interests and our values, both in the region and around the world.

So when this deal gets implemented, we know that we will have dismantled the immediate concerns around Iran's nuclear program. We will have brought their stockpiles down to 98 percent. We will have significantly reduced the number of centrifuges that they operate. We will have installed an unprecedented inspections regime, and that will remain in place not just for 10 years, but for example, on the stockpiles, will continue to 15 years.

Iran will have pledged to the international community that it will not develop a nuclear weapon and now will be subject to an additional protocol, a more vigorous inspection and monitoring regime that lasts in perpetuity. We will have disabled a facility like Arak, the Arak facility, from allowing Iran to develop plutonium that could be used for a bomb. We will have greatly reduced the stockpile of uranium that's enriched. And we will have put in place inspections along the entire supply chain so that if uranium was diverted into a covert program, we would catch it.

So I can say with confidence, but more importantly, nuclear experts can say with confidence, that Iran will not be in a position to develop a nuclear bomb. We will have met our number-one priority.

Now, we'll still have problems with Iran's sponsorship of terrorism, its funding of proxies like Hizballah that threaten Israel and threaten the region, the destabilizing activities that they're engaging in, including in places like Yemen. And my hope is that building on this deal we can continue to have conversations with Iran that incentivize them to behave differently in the region, to be less aggressive, less hostile, more cooperative, to operate the way we expect nations in the international community to behave. But we're not counting on it. So this deal is not contingent on Iran changing its behavior. It's not contingent on Iran suddenly operating like a liberal democracy.

It solves one particular problem, which is making sure they don't have a bomb. And the point I've repeatedly made—and is, I believe, hard to dispute—is that it will be a lot easier for us to check Iran's nefarious activities, to push back against the other areas where they operate contrary to our interests or our allies' interests, if they don't have a bomb.

And so will they change their behavior? Will we seek to gain more cooperation from them in resolving issues like Syria or what's happening in Iraq, to stop encouraging Houthis in Yemen? We'll continue to engage with them. Although, keep in mind that, unlike the Cuba situation, we're not normalizing diplomatic relations here. So the contacts will continue to be

limited. But will we try to encourage them to take a more constructive path? Of course. But we're not betting on it.

And in fact, having resolved the nuclear issue, we will be in a stronger position to work with Israel, work with the Gulf countries, work with our other partners, work with the Europeans to bring additional pressure to bear on Iran around those issues that remain of concern.

But the argument that I've been already hearing—and this was foreshadowed even before the deal was announced—that because this deal does not solve all those other problems, that that's an argument for rejecting this deal, defies logic. It makes no sense. And it loses sight of what was our original number-one priority, which is making sure that they don't have a bomb. Okay?

Jon Karl [ABC News].

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action To Prevent Iran From Obtaining a Nuclear Weapon/President Bashar al-Asad of Syria/Israel

Q. Mr. President, does it give you any pause to see this deal praised by Syrian dictator Asad as a "great victory for Iran" or praised by those in Tehran who still shout "death to America," and yet our closest ally in the Middle East calls it "a mistake of historic proportions"? And here in Congress, it looks like a large majority will vote to reject this deal. I know you can veto that rejection, but do you have any concerns about seeing a majority of the people's representatives in Congress saying that this is a bad deal?

And if I can just ask you quick political question, a very quick one.

The President. Jon, I think——

Q. Donald——

The President. Let me answer the question that you asked.

Q. Yes.

The President. It does not give me pause that Mr. Asad or others in Tehran may be trying to spin the deal in a way that they think is favorable to what their constituencies want to hear. That's what politicians do. And that's been the case throughout. I mean, you'll recall that during the course of these negotiations over the last couple of months, every time the Supreme Leader or somebody tweeted something out, for some reason, we all bought into the notion, well, the Obama administration must be giving this or capitulating to that. Well, now we have a document, so you can see what the deal is.

We don't have to speculate, we don't have to engage in spin, you can just read what it says and what is required. And nobody has disputed that as a consequence of this agreement, Iran has to drastically reduce its stockpiles of uranium, is cut off from plutonium; the Fordow facility that is underground is converted; that we have an unprecedented inspections regime; that we have snap-back provisions if they cheat. The facts are the facts. And I'm not concerned about what others say about it.

Now, with respect to Congress, my hope—I won't prejudge this—my hope is, is that everyone in Congress also evaluates this agreement based on the facts; not on politics, not on posturing, not on the fact that this is a deal I bring to Congress as opposed to a Republican President, not based on lobbying, but based on what's in the national interests of the United States of America.

And I think that if Congress does that, then in fact, based on the facts, the majority of Congress should approve of this deal. But we live in Washington, and politics do intrude. And as I said in an interview yesterday, I am not betting on the Republican Party rallying behind this agreement. I do expect the debate to be based on facts and not speculation or misinformation. And that I welcome, in part because, look, there are legitimate, real concerns here. We've already talked about it. We have huge differences with Iran. Israel has legitimate concerns about its security relative to Iran. I mean, you have a large country with a significant military that has proclaimed that Israel shouldn't exist, that has denied the Holocaust, that has financed Hizballah, and as a consequence, there are missiles that are pointed towards Tel Aviv.

And so I think there are very good reasons why Israelis are nervous about Iran's position in the world generally. And I've said this to Prime Minister Netanyahu; I've said it directly

to the Israeli people. But what I've also said is that all those threats are compounded if Iran gets a nuclear weapon. And for all the objections of Prime Minister Netanyahu or, for that matter, some of the Republican leadership that's already spoken, none of them have presented to me or the American people a better alternative.

I'm hearing a lot of talking points being repeated about "this is a bad deal," "this is a historically bad deal," "this will threaten Israel and threaten the world and threaten the United States." I mean, there's been a lot of that.

What I haven't heard is, what is your preferred alternative? If 99 percent of the world community and the majority of nuclear experts look at this thing and they say, this will prevent Iran from getting a nuclear bomb, and you are arguing either that it does not, or that even if it does, it's temporary, or that because they're going to get a windfall of their accounts being unfrozen that they'll cause more problems, then you should have some alternative to present. And I haven't heard that. And the reason is because there really are only two alternatives here: Either the issue of Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon is resolved diplomatically through a negotiation, or it's resolved through force, through war. Those are the options.

Now, you'll hear some critics say, well, we could have negotiated a better deal. Okay. What does that mean? I think the suggestion among a lot of the critics has been that a better deal, an acceptable deal would be one in which Iran has no nuclear capacity at all, peaceful or otherwise. The problem with that position is that there is nobody who thinks that Iran would or could ever accept that and the international community does not take the view that Iran can't have a peaceful nuclear program. They agree with us that Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon.

And so we don't have diplomatic leverage to eliminate every vestige of a peaceful nuclear program in Iran. What we do have the leverage to do is to make sure they don't have a weapon. That's exactly what we've done.

So, to go back to Congress, I'd challenge those who are objecting to this agreement, number one, to read the agreement before they comment on it; number two, to explain specifically where it is that they think this agreement does not prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, and why they're right and people like Ernie Moniz, who is an MIT nuclear physicist and an expert in these issues, is wrong, why the rest of the world is wrong, and then present an alternative.

And if the alternative is that we should bring Iran to heel through military force, then those critics should say so. And that will be an honest debate.

All right.

Q. Mr. President, if I can——

The President. No, no——

Q. Prime Minister Netanyahu said that you have a situation where Iran can delay 24 days before giving access to military facilities——

The President. I'm happy to—that's a good example. So let's take the issue of 24 days. This has been, I think, swirling today, the notion that this is insufficient in terms of inspections.

Now, keep in mind, first of all, that we'll have 24/7 inspections of declared nuclear facilities—Fordow, Natanz, Arak, their uranium mines; facilities that are known to produce centrifuges, parts. That entire infrastructure that we know about, we will have sophisticated, 24/7 monitoring of those facilities. Okay?

So then, the issue is, what if they try to develop a covert program? Now, one of the advantages of having inspections across the entire production chain is that it makes it very difficult to set up a covert program. There are only so many uranium mines in Iran. And if in fact we're counting the amount of uranium that's being mined and suddenly some is missing on the back end, they've got some explaining to do.

So we're able to track what's happening along the existing facilities to make sure that there is not diversion into a covert program. But let's say that Iran is so determined that it now wants to operate covertly. The IAEA—the international organization charged with implementing the nonproliferation treaty and monitoring nuclear activities in countries around the world—the IAEA will have the ability to say, that undeclared site we're concerned

about, we see something suspicious. And they will be able to say to Iran, we want to go inspect that.

Now, if Iran objects, we can override it. In the agreement, we've set it up so we can override Iran's objection. And we don't need Russia or China in order for us to get that override. And if they continue to object, we're in a position to snap back sanctions and declare that Iran is in violation and is cheating.

As for the fact that it may take 24 days to finally get access to the site, the nature of nuclear programs and facilities is such, this is not something you hide in a closet. This is not something you put on a dolly and kind of wheel off somewhere. And by the way, if we identify an undeclared site that we're suspicious about, we're going to be keeping eyes on it. So we're going to be monitoring what the activity is, and that's going to be something that will be evidence, if we think that some funny business was going on there, that we can then present to the international community.

So we'll be monitoring that that entire time. And by the way, if there is nuclear material on that site, your high school physics will remind us that that leaves a trace. And so we'll know that, in fact, there was a violation of the agreement.

So the point is, Jonathan, that this is the most vigorous inspection and verification regime by far that has ever been negotiated. Is it possible that Iran decides to try to cheat despite having this entire inspection verification mechanism? It's possible. But if it does, first of all, we've built in a 1-year breakout time, which gives us a year to respond forcefully. And we've built in a snap-back provision so we don't have to go through lengthy negotiations at the U.N. to put the sanctions right back in place.

And so, really, the only argument you can make against the verification and inspection mechanism that we've put forward is that Iran is so intent on obtaining a nuclear weapon that no inspection regime and no verification mechanism would be sufficient because they'd find some way to get around it because they're untrustworthy.

And if that's your view, then we go back to the choice that you have to make earlier. That means, presumably, that you can't negotiate. And what you're really saying is, is that you've got to apply military force to guarantee that they don't have a nuclear program. And if somebody wants to make that debate, whether it's the Republican leadership or Prime Minister Netanyahu or the Israeli Ambassador or others, they're free to make it. But it's not persuasive.

Carol Lee [Wall Street Journal].

Iranian Arms Embargo and Ballistic Missile Prohibition/The President's Middle East Policies

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I want to ask you about the arms and ballistic missile embargo. Why did you decide—agree to lift those even with the 5- and 8-year durations?

The President. Right.

Q. It's obviously emerging as a sticking point on the Hill. And are you concerned that arms to Iran will go to Hizballah or Hamas? And is there anything that you or a future President can do to stop that?

And if you don't mind, I mean, I wanted to see if you could step back a little bit, and when you look at this Iran deal and all the other issues and unrest that's happening in the Middle East, what kind of Middle East do you want to leave when you leave the White House in a year and a half?

The President. Good. So the issue of the arms embargo and ballistic missiles is of real concern to us, has been of real concern to us. And it is in the national security interest of the United States to prevent Iran from sending weapons to Hizballah, for example, or sending weapons to the Houthis in Yemen that accelerate a civil war there.

We have a number of mechanisms under international law that gives us authority to interdict arms shipments by Iran. One of those mechanisms is the U.N. security resolution related to Iran's nuclear program. Essentially, Iran was sanctioned because of what had happened at Fordow, its unwillingness to comply with previous U.N. security resolutions about their nuclear program. And as part of the

package of sanctions that was slapped on them, the issue of arms and ballistic missiles were included.

Now, under the terms of the original U.N. resolution, the fact is that once an agreement was arrived at that gave the international community assurance Iran didn't have a nuclear weapon, you could argue, just looking at the text, that those arms and ballistic missile prohibitions should immediately go away.

But what I said to our negotiators was, given that Iran has breached trust and the uncertainty of our allies in the region about Iran's activities, let's press for a longer extension of the arms embargo and the ballistic missile prohibitions. And we got that. We got 5 years in which, under this new agreement, arms coming in and out of Iran are prohibited. And we got 8 years with respect to ballistic missiles.

But part of the reason why we were willing to extend it only for 5, let's say, as opposed to a longer period of time, is because we have other U.N. resolutions that prohibit arms sales by Iran to organizations like Hizballah. We have other U.N. resolutions and multilateral agreements that give us authority to interdict arms shipments from Iran throughout the region. And so we've had belts and suspenders and buttons, a whole bunch of different legal authorities. These legal authorities under the nuclear program may lapse after 5 or 8 years, but we'll still be in possession of other legal authorities that allow us to interdict those arms.

And truthfully, these prohibitions are not self-enforcing. It's not like the U.N. has the capacity to police what Iran is doing. What it does is, is it gives us authority under international law to prevent arms shipments from happening in concert with our allies and our partners. And the real problem, if you look at how, for example, Hizballah got a lot of missiles that are a grave threat to Israel and many of our friends in the region, it's not because they were legal. It's not because somehow that was authorized under international law. It was because there was insufficient intelligence or capacity to stop those shipments.

So the bottom line is, Carol, I share the concerns of Israel, Saudis, Gulf partners about Iran shipping arms and causing conflict and chaos in the region. And that's why I've said to them, let's double down and partner much more effectively to improve our intelligence capacity and our interdiction capacity so that fewer of those arms shipments are getting through the net.

But the legal authorities we'll still possess. And obviously, we've got our own unilateral prohibitions and sanctions in place around nonnuclear issues, like support for Hizballah. And those remain in place.

Now, in terms of the larger issues of the Middle East, obviously, that's a longer discussion. I think my key goal when I turn over the keys to the President—the next President is that we are on track to defeat ISIL, that they are much more contained, and we're moving in the right direction there; that we have jumpstarted a process to resolve the civil war in Syria, which is like an open sore in the region and is giving refuge to terrorist organizations who are taking advantage of that chaos; to make sure that in Iraq, not only have we pushed back ISIL, but we've also created an environment in which Sunni, Shia, and Kurd are starting to operate and function more effectively together; and to be in a conversation with all our partners in the region about how we have strengthened our security partnerships so that they feel they can address any potential threats that may come, including threats from Iran. And that includes providing additional security assurances and cooperation to Israel, building on the unprecedented cooperation that we have already put in place and support that we've already put in place. It includes the work that we've done with the GCC up at Camp David, making sure that we execute that.

If we've done those things, then the problems in the Middle East will not be solved. And ultimately, it's not the job of the President of the United States to solve every problem in the Middle East. The people of the Middle East are going to have to solve some of these problems themselves. But I think we can provide that next President at least a foundation for continued progress in these various areas.

The last thing I would say—and this is a longer term issue—is we have to address the youth in the region with jobs and opportunity and a better vision for the future so that they are not tempted by the nihilistic, violent dead end that organizations like ISIL offer. Again, we can't do that entirely by ourselves, but we can partner with well-intentioned organizations, states, NGOs, religious leaders in the region. We have to do a better job of that than we've been doing so far. Okay?

All right. Michael Crowley [Politico].

Syria/Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/Iran-U.S. Relations/Iraq

Q. Thank you. You alluded earlier to Iran's role in Syria, just to focus on that for a moment.

The President. Yes.

Q. Many analysts and some former members of your administration believe that the kind of negotiated political settlement that you say is necessary in Syria will require working directly with Iran and giving Iran an important role. Do you agree? And is that a dialogue you'll be actively seeking?

And what about the fight against ISIS? What would it take for there to be explicit cooperation between the U.S. and Iran?

The President. I do agree that we're not going to solve the problems in Syria unless there's buy-in from the Russians, the Iranians, the Turks, our Gulf partners. It's too chaotic. There are too many factions. There's too much money and too many arms flooding into the zone. It's gotten caught up in both sectarian conflict and geopolitical jockeying. And in order for us to resolve it, there's going to have to be agreement among the major powers that are interested in Syria that this is not going to be won on the battlefield. So Iran is one of those players, and I think that it's important for them to be part of that conversation.

I want to repeat what I said earlier. We have not—and I don't anticipate any time in the near future—restored normal diplomatic relations with Iran. And so I do not foresee a formal set of agreements with Iran in terms of how we're conducting our counter-ISIL campaign.

But clearly, Iran has influence in Iraq. Iraq has a majority Shia population. They have relationships to Iran. Some are natural. We expect somebody like Prime Minister Abadi to meet with and negotiate and work with Iran as its neighbor. Some are less legitimate, where you see Iran financing Shia militias that, in the past, have killed American soldiers and, in the future, may carry out atrocities when they move into Sunni areas.

And so we're working with our diplomats on the ground, as well as our military teams on the ground to asses where can we appropriately at least deconflict and where can we work with Prime Minister Abadi around an overall strategy for Iraq to regain its sovereignty and where do we tell Abadi, you know what, what Iran is doing there is a problem, and we can't cooperate in that area, for example, unless you get those folks out of there because we're not going to have our troops, even in an advisory or training role, looking over their shoulders because they're not sure what might happen to them. And those conversations have been ongoing. I think they will continue.

The one thing you can count on is that any work that the U.S. Government does or the U.S. military does in Iraq with other partners on the ground is premised on the idea that they are reporting to—under the chain of command of the Iraqi Government and Iraqi security forces. If we don't have confidence that ultimately Abadi is directing those soldiers, then it's tough for us to have any kind of direct relationship. Okay?

Major Garrett [CBS News].

U.S. Citizens Detained in Iran/Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action To Prevent Iran From Obtaining a Nuclear Weapon/Iranian Arms Embargo and Ballistic Missile Prohibition

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. As you well know, there are four Americans in Iran: three held on trumped-up charges, according to your administration; one, whereabouts unknown. Can you tell the country, sir, why you are content, with all the fanfare around this deal, to

leave the conscience of this Nation and the strength of this Nation unaccounted for in relation to these four Americans?

And last week, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said, under no circumstances should there be any relief for Iran in terms of ballistic missiles or conventional weapons. It is perceived that that was a last-minute capitulation in these negotiations. Many in the Pentagon feel you've left the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff hung out to dry. Could you comment?

The President. I've got to give you credit, Major, for how you craft those questions. [*Laughter*] First, the notion that I am content, as I celebrate, with American citizens languishing in Iranian jails, Major, that's nonsense, and you should know better. I've met with the families of some of those folks. Nobody is content. And our diplomats and our teams are working diligently to try to get them out.

Now, if the question is why we did not tie the negotiations to their release, think about the logic that that creates. Suddenly, Iran realizes, you know what, maybe we can get additional concessions out of the Americans by holding these individuals. It makes it much more difficult for us to walk away if Iran somehow thinks that a nuclear deal is dependent in some fashion on the nuclear deal. And by the way, if we had walked away from the nuclear deal, we'd still be pushing them just as hard to get these folks out. That's why those issues are not connected. But we are working every single day to try to get them out and won't stop until they're out and rejoined with their families.

With respect to the Chairman's testimony, to some degree I already answered this with Carol. We are not taking the pressure off Iran with respect to arms and with respect to ballistic missiles. As I just explained, not only do we keep in place for 5 years the arms embargo under this particular new U.N. resolution, not only do we maintain the 8 years on the ballistic missiles under this particular U.N. resolution, but we have a host of other multilateral and unilateral authorities that allow us to take action where we see Iran engaged in those activities whether it's 6 years from now or 10 years from now.

So we have not lost those legal authorities. And in fact, part of my pitch to the GCC countries, as well as to Prime Minister Netanyahu, is we should do a better job making sure that Iran is not engaged in sending arms to organizations like Hizballah. And as I just indicated, that means improving our intelligence capacity and our interdiction capacity with our partners. Okay?

April Ryan [American Urban Radio Networks].

Criminal Justice Reform/The President's Upcoming Travel to Kenya/Presidential Medal of Freedom Revocation/Rape

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I want to change the subject a bit. Earlier this year, on the flight to Selma, you said, on matters of race, as President, your job is to close the remaining gaps that are left in State and Federal government. Now, how does criminal justice reform fit into that equation? And what gaps remain for you—in the—towards the end of your Presidency? And also, what does it mean to travel to Kenya, your father's homeland, in the next couple of weeks as President to the United States? And lastly, would you revoke the Medal of Freedom from Bill Cosby?

The President. You stuffed a lot in there, April. [*Laughter*] You know what?

Q. I learned from my colleagues.

The President. Say, who did you learn from? Jonathan Karl? Is that what you said? [*Laughter*]

The—on criminal justice reform, obviously, I gave a lengthy speech yesterday, but I—this is something that I've been thinking about a lot; been working first with Eric Holder, now with Loretta Lynch about—we've been working on along with other prosecutors of the U.S. Attorney's Office. It's an outgrowth of the Task Force that we put together, post-Ferguson and the Garner case in New York.

And I don't think that the criminal justice system is obviously the sole source of racial tension in this country or the key institution to resolving the opportunity gap. But I think it is a part of the broader set of challenges that we face in creating a more perfect Union.

And the good news is, is that this is one of those rare issues where we've got some Republican and Democratic interest, as well as Federal, State, and local interest in solving the problem. I think people recognize that there are violent criminals out there and they've got to be locked up. We've got to have tough prosecutors; we have to support our law enforcement officials. Police are in a tough job, and they are helping to keep us safe, and we are grateful and thankful to them.

But what we also know is this huge spike in incarcerations is also driven by nonviolent drug offenses where the sentencing is completely out of proportion with the crime. And that costs taxpayers enormous amounts of money. It is debilitating communities who are seeing huge proportions of the young men in their communities finding themselves with a criminal record, rendering them oftentimes unemployable. So it compounds problems that these communities already have.

And so I am very appreciative of folks like Dick Durbin and Cory Booker, alongside Mike Lee and Rand Paul and other folks in the House, who are working together to see if we can both reduce some of these mandatory minimums around nonviolent drug offenses. Because again, I tend not to have a lot of sympathy when it comes to violent crime. But when it comes to nonviolent drug offenses, is there work that we can do to reduce mandatory minimums, create more diversion programs like drug courts? Then, can we do a better job on the rehabilitation side inside of prisons so that we are preparing these folks who are eventually going to be released to reenter the workforce? On the back end, are we doing more to link them up with reentry programs that are effective?

And this may be an area where we could have some really significant bipartisan legislation that doesn't eliminate all the other challenges we've got. Because the most important goal is keeping folks from getting in the criminal justice system in the first place, which means early childhood education and good jobs and making sure that we're not segregating folks in impoverished communities that have no contact with opportunity.

But this can make a difference. I met these four ex-offenders, as I said, yesterday, and what was remarkable was how they had turned their lives around. And these were some folks who had been some pretty tough criminals. One of them had served 10 years; another was a repeat offender that had served a lot of time. And in each instance, somebody intervened at some point in their lives—once they had already been in the criminal justice system, once they had already gotten in trouble—and said, you know what, I think you can live a different way, and I'm willing to help you.

And that one person, an art teacher or a GED teacher or somebody who was willing to offer a guy a job—I want to give a shout-out to Five Guys, because one of the guys there was an ex-felon, and Five Guys gave him a job. And he ended up becoming a manager at the store and was able to completely turn his life around. But the point was, somebody reached out to that person and gave him a chance.

And so part of our question should be, how about somebody reaching out to these guys when they're 10 or 11 or 12 or 8, as opposed to waiting until they've already gone through a criminal justice program. That's part of why we're doing "My Brother's Keeper." But this is an area where I feel modestly optimistic.

I think in the meantime, we've got to stay on top of keeping the crime rate down, because part of the reason I think there's a conversation taking place is, violent crime has significantly dropped. Last year, we saw both incarcerations and the crime rate drop, and this can always turn if we start seeing renewed problems in terms of violent crime. And there's parts of the country where violent crime is still a real problem, including my hometown of Chicago and in Baltimore.

And part of what I've asked Attorney General Lynch to do is to figure out, how can we refocus attention? If we're going to do a package of criminal justice reforms, part of it would be actually having a greater police presence and more law enforcement in the communities that are really getting hit hard and haven't seen

some of the drops in violent crime that we've seen in places like Manhattan, for example.

With respect to the visit to Kenya, it's obviously something I'm looking forward to. I'll be honest with you, visiting Kenya as a private citizen is probably more meaningful to me than visiting as President because I can actually get outside of a hotel room or a conference center. [*Laughter*] And just the logistics of visiting a place are always tough as President, but it's obviously symbolically important. And my hope is, is that we can deliver a message that the U.S. is a strong partner not just for Kenya, but for sub-Saharan Africa generally; build on the progress that's been made around issues of health and education; focus on counterterrorism issues that are important in East Africa because of al-Shabaab and some of the tragedies that have happened inside of Kenya; and continue to encourage democracy and the reduction of corruption inside that country that sometimes has held back this incredibly gifted and blessed country.

And with respect to the Medal of Freedom, there's no precedent for revoking a medal. We don't have that mechanism. And as you know, I tend to make it a policy not to comment on the specifics of cases where there might still be, if not criminal, then civil issues involved.

I'll say this: If you give a woman—or a man, for that matter—without his or her knowledge, a drug, and then have sex with that person without consent, that's rape. And I think this country—any civilized country—should have no tolerance for rape.

All right. Have we exhausted Iran questions here? [*Laughter*] I think there's a helicopter that's coming. But I really am enjoying this Iran debate. The—topics that may not have been touched upon, criticisms that you've heard that I did not answer? I—go ahead. I know Josh is getting a little stressed here—[*laughter*]—but I just want to make sure that we're not leaving any stones unturned here. Go ahead.

Impact of Lifting Economic Sanctions Against Iran

Q. Yes. Thanks, Mr. President. I'll be brief. The argument has been made that Iran now has a cash windfall, billions to spend.

The President. Yes.

Q. Your people seem confident they're going to spend it at home. Why are you confident they're not going to spend it on arming Hizballah, arming Bashar al-Asad, et cetera?

The President. I think that's a great question, and I'm glad you brought it up. I think it is a mistake to characterize our belief that they will just spend it on daycare centers and roads and paying down debt. We think that they have to do some of that, because Rouhani was elected specifically on the premise of improving the economic situation inside of Iran. That economy has tanked since we imposed sanctions.

So the notion that they're just immediately going to turn over a hundred billion dollars to the IRGC or the Quds Force I think runs contrary to all the intelligence that we've seen and the commitments that the Iranian Government has made.

Do we think that with the sanctions coming down, that Iran will have some additional resources for its military and for some of the activities in the region that are a threat to us and a threat to our allies? I think that is a likelihood that they've got some additional resources. Do I think it's a game changer for them? No.

They are currently supporting Hizballah, and there is a ceiling, a pace at which they could support Hizballah even more, particularly in the chaos that's taking place in Syria. So can they potentially try to get more assistance there? Yes. Should we put more resources into blocking them from getting that assistance to Hizballah? Yes. Is the incremental additional money that they've got to try to destabilize the region or send to their proxies, is that more important than preventing Iran from getting a nuclear weapon? No. All right? So I think, again, this is a matter of us making a determination of what is our priority.

The other problem with the argument that folks have been making about, oh, this is a

windfall, and suddenly, Iran is flushed with cash, and they're going to take over the world. And I say that not tongue-in-cheek, because if you look at some of the statements by some of our critics, you would think that Iran is, in fact, going to take over the world as a consequence of this deal, which I think would be news to the Iranians.

What—that argument is also premised on the notion that if there is no deal, if Congress votes down this deal, that we're able to keep sanctions in place with the same vigor and effectiveness as we have right now. And that, I can promise you, is not true. That is absolutely not true. I want to repeat: We're not writing Iran a check. This is Iran's money that we were able to block from them having access to. That required the cooperation of countries all around the world, many of whom really want to purchase oil from Iran. The imposition of sanctions—their cooperation with us—has cost them billions of dollars, made it harder for them. They've been willing to do that because they've believed we were sincere about trying to resolve the nuclear issue peacefully and they considered that a priority—a high-enough priority that they were willing to cooperate with us on sanctions.

If they saw us walking away, or more specifically, if they saw the U.S. Congress effectively vetoing the judgment of 99 percent of the world community that this is a deal that resolves the Iranian weapons program—nuclear weapons program in an equitable way, the sanctions system unravels. And so we could still maintain some of our unilateral sanctions, but it would be far less effective, as it was before we were able to put together these multilateral sanctions.

So maybe they don't get a hundred million—billion dollars; maybe they get $60 billion or $70 billion instead. The price for that that we've paid is that now Iran is pursuing a nuclear weapon. We have no inspectors on the ground. We don't know what's going on. They're still getting some cash windfall. We've lost credibility in the eyes of the world. We will have effectively united Iran and divided ourselves from our allies. A terrible position to be in. Okay?

I'm just going to look for—I made some notes about many of the arguments, the other arguments that I've heard here.

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action To Prevent Iran From Obtaining a Nuclear Weapon

Q. What about—[*inaudible*]—at the end of the deal?

The President. Okay, that's a good one. The notion——

Q. At the end of the deal, they could go back and have a nuclear program?

The President. Right. Well, so let's address this issue of—because that's the other big argument that's been made. All right, let's assume that the deal holds for 10 years, Iran doesn't cheat. Now, at the end of 10 years, some of the restrictions have been lifted, although, remember, others have—stay in place for 15 years. So, for example, they've still got to keep their stockpiles at a minimal level for 15 years. The inspections don't go away; those are still in place 15, 20 years from now. Their commitment under the Non-Proliferation Treaty does not go away; that's still in place. The additional protocol that they have to sign up for under this deal, which requires a more extensive inspection and verification mechanism, that stays in place.

So there's no scenario in which a U.S. President is not in a stronger position 12, 13, 15 years from now if in fact Iran decided at that point they still wanted to get a nuclear weapon. Keep in mind, we will have maintained a 1-year breakout time, we will have rolled back their program, frozen their facilities, kept them under severe restrictions, had observers. They will have made international commitments supported by countries around the world. And——

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Hold on a second. And if at that point they finally decided, you know what, we're going to cheat—or not even cheat, at that point, they decide openly, we're now pursuing a nuclear weapon, they're still in

violation of this deal and the commitments they've made internationally.

And so we are still in a position to mobilize the world community to say, no, you can't have a nuclear weapon. And they're not in a stronger position to get a nuclear weapon at that point; they're in a weaker position than they are today. And by the way, we haven't given away any of our military capabilities. We're not in a weaker position to respond.

So, even if everything the critics were saying was true—that at the end of 10 years or 12 years or 15 years, Iran now is in a position to decide it wants a nuclear weapon, that they're at a breakout point—they won't be at a breakout point that is more dangerous than the breakout point they're in right now. They won't be at a breakout point that is shorter than the one that exists today. And so why wouldn't we at least make sure that for the next 10, 15 years, they are not getting a nuclear weapon and we can verify it; and afterwards, if they decide if they've changed their mind, we are then much more knowledgeable about what their capabilities are, much more knowledgeable about what their program is, and still in a position to take whatever actions we would take today?

Q. So none of this is holding out hope that they'll change their behavior?

The President. No.

Q. Nothing different——

The President. No. Look, I'm always hopeful that behavior may change for the sake of the Iranian people as well as people in the region. There are young people there who are not getting the opportunities they deserve because of conflict, because of sectarianism, because of poor governance, because of repression, because of terrorism. And I remain eternally hopeful that we can do something about that, and it should be part of U.S. foreign policy to do something about that. But I'm not banking on that to say that this deal is the right thing to do.

Again, it is incumbent on the critics of this deal to explain how an American President is in a worse position 12, 13, 14, 15 years from now if in fact at that point, Iran says we're going to pull out of the NPT, kick out inspectors, and go for a nuclear bomb. If that happens, that President will be in a better position than what happened if Iran, as a consequence of Congress rejecting this deal, decides that's it, we're done negotiating, we're going after a bomb right now.

The choices would be tougher today than they would be for that President 15 years from now. And I have not yet heard logic that refutes that.

All right. I really have to go now. I think we've hit the big themes. But I promise you, I will address this again. All right? I suspect this is not the last that we've heard of this debate.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 1:25 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Hoseini-Khamenei and President Hassan Rouhani of Iran; Israel's Ambassador to the U.S. Ron Dermer; Saeed Abedini, Amir M. Hekmati, Jason Rezaian, and Robert A. Levinson, U.S. citizens imprisoned or missing in Iran; former Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr.; rehabilitated ex-offenders Jeffrey Copeland, El Sawyer, and Robert Warner of Philadelphia, PA; and White House Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest. He also referred to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) of Iran. A reporter referred to actor and comedian Bill Cosby.

Remarks Announcing the ConnectHome Initiative at Durant High School in Durant, Oklahoma
July 15, 2015

The President. Hello, Oklahoma! *Halito!*

Audience members. Halito!

The President. Everybody, please have a seat. Have a seat. It's good to see you. How is everybody doing?

First of all, Michelle says hi. [*Laughter*] And I want to thank all of you for helping to build the terrific partnership that we share with the Choctaw Nation.

Audience member. Love you!

The President. I love you too. [*Laughter*] So I want to first of all thank Chief Gary Batton and the many tribal leaders who are here today. I want to thank the extraordinary young people that I just had a chance to meet with. Give them a big round of applause. They were just exceptional and gave me all kinds of interesting thoughts and ideas about how young people can lead and thrive and reshape America. And I could not be prouder of them.

As many of you know, we've held a Tribal Nations Conference each year that I've been President. And just last week, as part of what we call our Generation Indigenous initiative, focused on young people, we hosted our first-ever Tribal Youth Gathering, with over a thousand young leaders from 230 tribes, including several Choctaw youth. And you spend time with these young people from all across the country, and they will blow you away. They are smart, and they're passionate, and they are ready to seize the future.

And Michelle and I believe we've got a special obligation to make sure that tribal youth have every opportunity to achieve their potential not just for the benefit of themselves and their communities, but for our entire nation; that all of you young people have a chance to succeed not by leaving your communities, but by coming back and investing in your communities; and that you have a whole range of options that can lift us all up. And so we are really excited about what you're doing, and we're really excited about some of the work that's going to be done not just here, but all across the country. That's why I'm here today.

When you step back and look at everything that we've done in the past 6½ years to rebuild our economy on a new foundation—from retooling our industries to rethinking our schools, reforming our health care system—all of it's been in pursuit of one goal, and that's creating opportunity for all people, not just some, but everybody.

And thanks to the hard work and the resilience of the American people, the work we've done is paying off. So our businesses have created 2.8 [12.8]* million new jobs over the past 64 months in a row. That's the longest streak of private sector job growth on record. The housing market is stronger. The stock market recovered, so people's 401(k)s and retirement accounts got replenished. More than 16 million Americans now have the financial security of having health insurance. We've invested in clean energy. We've made ourselves more independent of foreign oil. We've seen jumps in high school enrollment and college graduation rates.

So, across the board, there's really no economic measure where we're not doing better than we were when I came into office. That's the good news. But I also made it clear when I came into office that even as we're trying to make sure the entire economy recovers, we also have to pay attention to those communities that all too often have been neglected and fallen behind. And as part of that, I said we're going to do better by our First Americans. We're going to do better.

Now, we can't reverse centuries of history: broken treaties, broken promises. But I did believe that we could come together as partners and forge a new path based on trust and respect. And that's what we've tried to do. So we strengthened the sovereignty of tribal nations. We gave more power to tribal courts and police. We restored hundreds of thousands of acres of tribal trust lands. We expanded opportunity by permanently reauthorizing the Indian Health Care Improvement Act and helping businesses and building roads and moving forward on renewable energy projects in Indian Country. We untied tribal hands when it came to dealing with domestic violence, which was really important.

Here in Oklahoma, we designated the Choctaw Nation as one of America's first Promise Zones, areas where the Federal Government is partnering with local communities and businesses to jumpstart economic development and job creation, expand educational opportunities, and increase affordable housing and improve public safety. And as a result, you've

* White House correction.

already received Federal investments in Early Head Start to make sure our young people are getting the best possible beginning in life, childcare, job training, support for young entrepreneurs. And I've called on Congress to pass a Promise Zone tax credit to encourage employment and private sector investment in places like this.

So we've made a lot of progress not just in Indian Country, but in America as a whole. But we've got more work to do. We've got more work to do, especially because the economy around the globe is changing so fast.

So today I want to focus on one way we can prepare our kids and our workers for an increasingly competitive world, a way that we can help our entrepreneurs sell more goods here at home and overseas, a way where we can get every American ready to seize the opportunities of a 21st-century economy.

Today we're going to take another step to close the digital divide in America and make sure everybody in America has access to high-speed broadband Internet. We're taking some initiatives today to make that happen.

Now, I don't really have to tell you why this is important. Even old folks like me know it's important. In this digital age, when you can apply for a job, take a course, pay your bills, order a pizza, even find a date—[*laughter*]—by tapping your phone, the Internet is not a luxury, it's a necessity. You cannot connect with today's economy without having access to the Internet. Now, that doesn't mean I want folks on the Internet all the time. I always tell young people when I meet them, sometimes, they just have the phone up, I'm standing right in front of them—[*laughter*]—and I've got to tell them, young man, put down that phone. Shake the hand of your President. [*Laughter*] And then, after you shake my hand and look me in the eye and told me your name, then you can maybe go back to taking pictures. [*Laughter*] So there's nothing wrong with every once in a while putting the technology aside and actually having a conversation. This is something I talk to Malia and Sasha about. We don't let those phones at the dinner table, but that's a whole other story. I went off track.

But if you're not connected today, then it's very hard for you to understand what's happening in our economy. Now, here's the problem. While high-speed Internet access is a given, it's assumed for millions of Americans, it's still out of reach for too many people, especially in low-income and rural communities. More than 90 percent of households headed by a college graduate use the Internet. Fewer than half of households with less than a high school education are plugged into the Internet. So, in other words, the people who could benefit the most from the latest technology are the least likely to have it.

So if you're a student and you don't have Internet access at home, that means you could be struggling to type papers or do online homework assignments or learn basic computer skills or try to get help from your teacher. You may have to wait in long lines at public libraries or even in parking lots at the local McDonald's just to try to get digital access. And what that means is, you're not learning the critical tech skills required to succeed in tomorrow's economy.

And this has consequences. A lot of you have heard about the achievement gap, how some kids in certain groups consistently lag behind, and the opportunity gap, where certain groups have a tougher time getting attached to the labor market. Well, this starts with a "homework gap" for a lot of young people and an "access to learning" gap, which then can translate into a science gap or a math gap and eventually becomes an economic gap for our country. And that's not what America is about. America doesn't guarantee you success. That's never been the promise. But what America does stand for—has to stand for—is, if you're willing to work hard and take responsibility, then you can succeed, no matter where you start off.

That's the essential American story. That's why we admire stories like Abraham Lincoln's. Starts off in a log cabin, teaches himself to read and write, and becomes our greatest President. That's what America is supposed to be about.

And in an increasingly competitive global economy, our whole country will fall behind unless we're got everybody on the field playing. I—obviously, as President, you travel

around a lot, and you go to countries like South Korea where a higher percentage of the population has high-speed broadband. And by the way, they pay their teachers the way they pay their doctors, and they consider education to be at the highest rung of the professions. Well, we will start falling behind those countries, which is unthinkable when we invented the stuff. [*Laughter*] I mean, it's American ingenuity that created the Internet, that created all these technologies. And the notion that now we'd leave some Americans behind in being able to use that, while other countries are racing ahead, that's a recipe for disaster, and it offends our most deeply held values.

A child's ability to succeed should not be based on where she lives, how much money her parents make. That's not who we are as a country. We've got a different standard. We're a people who believe we should be able to go as far as our talents and hard work will take us. And just because you don't have money in your household to buy fancy technology, that should not be an obstacle.

We've been doing a lot to encourage coding and STEM education: math and science and technology education. And unfortunately, for too many of our kids, that's something that's viewed as out of reach. Listen, people are not born coders. It's not as if suddenly, if you're born in Silicon Valley, you can figure out how to code a computer. That's not—what happens is, kids get exposed to this stuff early, and they learn, they soak it up like sponges.

And somewhere among the millions of young people who don't have access to the digital world could be the next Mark Zuckerberg, the next Bill Gates. Some of them might be right here in the Choctaw Nation. But only if we make sure you have access and exposure. If we don't give these young people the access to what they need to achieve their potential, then it's our loss, it's not just their loss.

So that's why my administration has made it a priority to connect more Americans to the Internet and close that digital divide that people have been talking about for 20 years now. We've invested so far in more than a hundred thousand miles of network infrastructure. That's enough to circle the globe four times. We've laid a lot of line. We've supported community broadband. We've championed net neutrality rules to make sure that the Internet providers treat all web traffic equally. And then, we launched something called ConnectEd, and this was targeted at making sure that every school was connected and classrooms were connected. And we're now well on our way to connecting 99 percent of students to high-speed broadband in their classrooms by 2018, and that includes here in Durant. So—[*applause*].

So far, 29 million more students in 55,000 schools are on track to have access to high-speed broadband, and 20 million more have Wi-Fi in their classrooms. And last year, when I visited Standing Rock Nation in North Dakota, I announced that Verizon would connect 10 Native student dorms, Microsoft would donate more tablets to more Native students, including students right here in Oklahoma. So we've been making progress. We're chipping away at this thing.

But today we're going to go further. I'm announcing a new initiative called ConnectHome. Now, ConnectEd, the idea was making sure the schools were connected and that you didn't have a situation where in a classroom, even if it was connected to the Internet, you could only have one student at a time or a couple of computers at a time. So we had to make sure that the classroom was state of the art. ConnectHome is designed to make high-speed Internet more affordable to residents in low-income housing units across the country. Because young people today, they're not just learning in the classroom, they're learning outside the classroom as well. So my Department of Housing and Urban Development is going to work with 28 communities, from Boston to Durham, from Seattle to Durant. About 200,000 of our most vulnerable children and their families will soon be able to access affordable Internet in their home.

Now, I want to give credit where credit is due. This is not something Government does by itself. I'm proud to say that folks around the country are stepping up to do their part. So

businesses like Cox are providing low-cost Internet and devices. Best Buy is committing free computer education and technical support so that folks learn how to make the most of the Internet. Organizations like the Boys & Girls Club will teach digital literacy so that kids in this community can be just as savvy as kids growing up in Silicon Valley. You've got nonprofits like EveryoneOn and U.S. Ignite who are going to help make this work on the ground. So we've got some great businesses and some great non-for-profits who are partnering with us on this.

But most importantly, it really requires all of us to be involved—parents, principals, teachers, neighbors—because we've got to demand the best in our schools and from our kids.

These investments are the right thing to do for our communities. They're the smart thing to do for the national economy. And we can't allow shortsighted cuts to the programs that are going to keep us competitive.

So this is a smart investment. These are the kinds of investments we need to make. Sometimes, there's a debate going on in Washington about the size of Government and what we should be spending on. And look, I've said before, there are programs in Washington that don't work, and we don't want taxpayer money wasted. But there are some investments that we make in future generations, there are investments we make in things that help all of us that we can't do by ourselves. We're not going to build a road by ourselves; we've got to do that together. We're not going to invest in basic research to solve Alzheimer's by ourselves. At least, I don't have enough money to do that. We've got to do that together. I'll pay some tax dollars, we'll pool our money, and then, we all invest in the research because we all stand to benefit at some point. We don't know when we might get sick, and it's good for us to keep that cutting edge of science.

Well, the same thing is true when it comes to schools and investing in our young people and making sure that they've got the tools they need to succeed. So this idea of ConnectHome, just like ConnectEd, this is going to make the difference for a dad who can now—because it's not just for the kids—now he can learn a new skill and apply for a better job after work, because he's working a tough shift to pay the rent, but he knows he wants to advance. He may be able to take an online course because he's got access to the Internet, and that could make all the difference in his family and his future. This will make a difference for the young entrepreneur: got a great idea, wants to start a business, can start it from her home. This will make a difference for the student who can now download the resources he needs to study for that exam that's coming up and then maybe come up with a new theory that's going to make a difference in our understanding of the world.

This will make a difference for young people like Kelsey Janway. Where's Kelsey? There's Kelsey, right here. Stand up, Kelsey, so everybody can see you. See—[*applause*]—so—all right, Kelsey, I know this is embarrassing, so you can sit down for a second. [*Laughter*]

Kelsey is 16 years old, a proud member of the Choctaw Nation. This might be a game changer for her. When she was younger, her family only got phone reception if they stood on a particular rock in their yard or on the top window sill in their bathroom. Is that right?

Heavener, OK, resident Kelsey Janway. Yes.

The President. You remember the rock.

Ms. Janway. Yes.

The President. It was this particular rock. So today, she has spotty, slow Internet service at home. And at school, service is just as bad, which makes it tough for students like Kelsey to learn the skills they need for success. Meanwhile, a high school nearby has much better technology; it gives those kids an advantage that she doesn't have.

Now, even though she's seen many of her peers get caught up in trouble or lose motivation and maybe drop out of school, Kelsey is keeping on pushing. She works two jobs, belongs to 11 organizations. Now, we're going to need to talk about that. That's a lot of organizations. I don't know where you're finding that time. She's leading a youth council where she helps guide some of her peers. And she says that even the slow Internet that she's got—probably that buffer and things coming up all

the time is getting on her nerves. Nevertheless, that's opened her mind and introduced her to views outside of her own. "I have a sense of a bigger world out there." That's what Kelsey says.

And that glimpse of what's possible, that can change everything. So, last week, Kelsey represented Choctaw Nation at the White House Tribal Youth Gathering. Had a chance to hear from Michelle, right? And she plans to return to the White House one day as President. So I'm just keeping the seat warm for her until she gets there. [*Laughter*] But I wanted to point out Kelsey having to stand on a rock trying to get phone service as an example of what we're talking about here.

There are amazing young people like Kelsey all across the country. I meet them every day: talented, smart, capable; of every race, of every ethnicity, every faith, every background. They've got big dreams. They're just poised to succeed, and they're willing to work through all kinds of obstacles to make great things happen. But they've got big dreams. We've got to have an interest in making sure that they can achieve those dreams. Kelsey, these young people, young people all across the country, they deserve a country that believes in those dreams and that invests in those dreams and that loves them for their dreams.

And ultimately, that's what America is about. You know, I know of—sometimes, folks get discouraged about Washington—I know I do—because the arguments between the parties are just so stark and all the differences are exaggerated and what attracts attention and gets on the news on TV is conflict and shouting and hollering. And as a consequence, everybody kind of goes into their corners, and nobody agrees to anything, and nothing gets done, and everybody gets cynical, and everybody gets frustrated.

But the thing is that, for all our disagreements, for all our debates, we are one family. And yes, we may squabble just like families do, but we're one family, from the First Americans to the newest Americans. We're one family. We're in this together. We're bound by a shared commitment to leave a better world for our children. We're bound together by a commitment to make sure that that next generation has inherited all the blessings that we inherited from the previous generation.

And that requires work on our part. It requires sacrifice. It requires compromise. And it requires that we invest in that future generation; that we're thinking not just about taking care of our own kids—because I know Malia and Sasha will be fine—but I want to make sure Kelsey is fine. I want to make sure every one of these young people are fine. I want to make sure that some kid stuck in the inner city somewhere, that they've got a shot. I can't do it for them, but I want to make sure at least that they've got a shot. I want to make sure that somebody down in some little border town in Texas, whose parents maybe never went to college, that they've got a dream and that they've got a shot.

And I'm willing to do something about that. And we all have to be. When we make those commitments to all of our children, the great thing about it is, the blessings are returned back to us, because you end up having a workforce that is better educated, which means, suddenly, companies want to locate, which means, businesses starts booming, which means, businesses start hiring, which means, everybody does better.

So not only is it the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do. That's our tradition. It's not Democratic or Republican, it is the American tradition. And we forget that sometimes because we're so caught up in our day-to-day politics, and we listen to a bunch of hooey on TV or talk radio—[*laughter*]—that doesn't really tell the truth about what's going on.

So I'm proud of Kelsey. I'm proud of these young people. I'm proud of Choctaw Nation. And I surely am proud of these United States of America. Let's get to work and make sure we're leaving the kind of country we want for our kids.

God bless you. God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:07 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Mark E. Zuckerberg,

founder and chief executive officer, Facebook, Inc.; and William H. Gates III, founder, technology adviser, and board member, Microsoft Corp.

Remarks Following a Visit at Federal Correctional Institution El Reno and an Exchange With Reporters in El Reno, Oklahoma
July 16, 2015

The President. Hello, everybody. So I'm just going to make a very quick statement. I want to thank the folks who were involved here in helping to arrange this visit at El Reno, a Federal penitentiary. And this is part of our effort to highlight both the challenges and opportunities that we face with respect to the criminal justice system.

Many of you heard me speak on Tuesday in Philadelphia about the fact that the United States accounts for 5 percent of the world's population; we account for 25 percent of the world's inmates. And that represents a huge surge since 1980. A primary driver of this mass incarceration phenomenon is our drug laws, our mandatory minimum sentencing around drug laws. And we have to consider whether this is the smartest way for us to both control crime and rehabilitate individuals.

This is costing taxpayers across America $80 billion a year. And as I said on Tuesday, there are people who need to be in prison, and I don't have tolerance for violent criminals. Many of them may have made mistakes, but we need to keep our communities safe. On the other hand, when we're looking at nonviolent offenders, most of them growing up in environments in which drug traffic is common, where many of their family members may have been involved in the drug trade, we have to reconsider whether 20-year, 30-year, life sentences for nonviolent crimes is the best way for us to solve these problems.

Here at El Reno, there's some excellent work that's being done inside this facility to provide job training, college degrees, drug counseling. The question is not only how do we make sure that we sustain those programs here in the prison, but how do we make sure that those same kind of institutional supports are there for kids and teenagers before they get into the criminal justice system? And are there ways for us to divert young people who make mistakes early on in life so that they don't get into the system in the first place?

The good news is, is that we've got Democrats and Republicans who I think are starting to work together in Congress and we're starting to see bipartisan efforts in State legislatures as well to start to reexamine some of these sentencing laws, to look at what kinds of work we can do in the community to keep kids out of the criminal justice system in the first place, how we can build on the successes for rehabilitation while individuals who are incarcerated, and then, what can we do to improve reentry going forward?

I just had the chance to meet with six inmates, all of them in for drug offenses. Many of them here for very long sentences. And every single one of them emphasized the fact that they understood they had done something wrong, they were prepared to take responsibility for it. But they also urged us to think about, how could society have reached them earlier on in life to keep them out of trouble? They expressed huge appreciation for the educational opportunities and drug counseling that they get here in prison, and they expressed some fear and concern about how difficult the transition was going to be.

So we've got an opportunity to make a difference at a time when, overall, violent crime rates have been dropping at the same time as incarcerations last year dropped for the first time in 40 years. My hope is that if we can keep on looking at the evidence, keep on looking at the facts, figure out what works, that we can start making a change that will save taxpayers money, keep our streets safe, and perhaps most importantly, keep families intact and break this cycle in which young people—par-

ticularly young people of color—are so prone to end up in a criminal justice system that makes it harder for them to ever get a job and ever be effective, full citizens of this country.

So I want to express appreciation to everybody who helped make this happen. I want to give a special shout-out to our prison guards. They've got a really tough job, and most of them are doing it in exemplary fashion. One of the things that we talked about is how we can continue to improve conditions in prisons. This is a outstanding institution within the system, and yet we've—they've got enormous overcrowding issues. I just took a look in a cell where, because of overcrowding, typically, we might have three people housed in a cell that looks to be, what, 15 by——

Correctional Officer Ronald Warlick. Nine by 10.

The President. What?

Officer Warlick. Nine by 10.

The President. Nine by 10. Three, wholegrown men in a 9-by-10 cell. There's been some improvement: Now we have two. But overcrowding like that is something that has to be addressed.

As I said the other day, gang activity, sexual assault inside these prisons—those are all things that have to be addressed. And so we're also going to be consulting with prison guards, wardens, and others to see how we can make some critical reforms.

A lot of this, though, is going to have to happen at the State level. So my goal is that we start seeing some improvements at the Federal level and that we're then able to see States across the country pick up the baton. And there are already some States that are leading the way on both sentencing reform as well as prison reform. We want to make sure that we're seeing what works and build off that.

All right? Thanks, everybody.

The President's Meeting With Inmates/Criminal Justice Reform

Q. Mr. President, what struck you most about seeing the prison here today?

The President. What's that?

Q. What struck you most about seeing this prison here today?

The President. Visiting with these six individuals. I've said this before: When they describe their youth and their childhood, these are young people who made mistakes that aren't that different than the mistakes I made and the mistakes that a lot of you guys made. The difference is they did not have the kinds of support structures, the second chances, the resources that would allow them to survive those mistakes.

And I think we have a tendency sometimes to almost take for granted or think it's normal that so many young people end up in our criminal justice system. It's not normal. It's not what happens in other countries.

What is normal is teenagers doing stupid things. What is normal is young people making mistakes. And we've got to be able to distinguish between dangerous individuals who need to be incapacitated and incarcerated versus young people who, are in an environment in which they are adapting, but if given different opportunities, a different vision of life, could be thriving the way we are.

That's what strikes me: There but for the grace of God. And that, I think, is something that we all have to think about.

All right? Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:25 a.m. in Cell Block B.

Remarks on the Shootings at United States Military Facilities in Chattanooga, Tennessee
July 16, 2015

I just received a briefing from FBI Director Comey, as well as my White House team, about the tragic shooting that took place in Chattanooga today. We don't know yet all the

details. We know that what appears to be a lone gunman carried out these attacks. We've identified a name. And at this point, a full investigation is taking place. The FBI will be in the lead, working closely with local law enforcement.

We've also been in contact with the Department of Defense to make sure that all our Defense facilities are properly attentive and vigilant as we sort through exactly what happened. And as details of the investigation proceed, we'll make sure that the FBI as well as local law enforcement are providing the public with all the information that's involved.

My main message right now is obviously the deepest sympathies of the American people to the four marines that have been killed. It is a heartbreaking circumstance for these individuals who have served our country with great valor to be killed in this fashion.

And although the families are still in the process of being contacted, I want them to know that I speak for the American people in expressing our deepest condolences and knowing that they have their full support—our full support as they try to overcome the grief that's involved here.

I also want to say that there are reports of injuries to Chattanooga local law enforcement officials. Thankfully, as far as we know at this point, they have survived the assault. And we want to make sure that they know that we're thinking of them. They're in our thoughts and prayers.

We take all shootings very seriously. Obviously, when you have an attack on a U.S. military facility, then we have to make sure that we have all the information necessary to make an assessment in terms of how this attack took place and what further precautions we can take in the future. And as we have more information, we'll let the public know.

But in the meantime, I'd ask all Americans to pray for the families who are grief stricken at this point. And I want everybody to understand that we will be thorough and prompt in figuring out exactly what happened.

All right? Thank you very much

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:20 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mohammod Youssuf Abdulazeez, suspected gunman in the shootings at the military facilities in Chattanooga, TN; Sgt. Carson A. Holmquist, USMC, Gy. Sgt. Thomas Sullivan, USMC, L. Cpl. Squire K. Wells, USMC, and S. Sgt. David Allen Wyatt, USMC, who were killed in the shooting at the Naval Operational Support Center in Chattanooga; and Chattanooga Police Officer Dennis Pedigo, who was injured in the shooting.

Statement on the Observance of Eid al-Fitr
July 16, 2015

Michelle and I would like to extend our warmest wishes to Muslims in the United States and around the world celebrating Eid-ul-Fitr. As Muslims mark the end of the month, they are reminded that Ramadan is a time to reflect spiritually, build communally, and aid those in need. While Eid marks the end of Ramadan, it marks a new beginning for each individual, a reason to celebrate and express gratitude on this holiday.

For millions of Muslims, the morning of Eid is marked with the call to prayer echoing through cities and towns across the globe. Millions of people head to local mosques for special Eid prayers followed by festive gatherings, gift exchanges, and feasts among friends, neighbors, and families. The diversity of traditions paint the vibrant images we see from around the world capturing the spirit and excitement of Eid: colorful dresses or white garments decorating the masses of people standing in lines for prayer, lanterns and ornaments lighting up bazaars and neighborhoods, intricate henna designs painted on hands of young girls and women, and an abundance of delectable foods and aromatic cuisines.

As Muslim Americans celebrate Eid across America, the holiday is a reminder to every

American of the importance of respecting those of all faiths and beliefs. This past year, New York City Public Schools announced adding Eid to their official school calendars alongside Christmas, Hanukkah, and other holidays, an acknowledgement of the great diversity and inclusiveness that adds to the richness of our Nation. During this year's White House iftar, I had the opportunity to meet inspiring young Muslim Americans who are leading efforts for greater understanding and unity across diverse communities. Following the iftar, one of the young attendees helped spearhead an effort that raised more than $75,000 for the churches burned in the wake of the shooting at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina. Americans of all faiths and beliefs must stand together to protect our democracy and strengthen our country as a whole.

Michelle and I hope today brings joy to all of your homes, both here in the U.S. and around the world. From my family to yours, *Eid Mubarak*.

NOTE: The statement referred to Faatimah Amatullah Knight, graduate student in religious studies, Chicago Theological Seminary.

Remarks During a Visit With Women's Army Auxiliary Corps World War II Veteran Emma Didlake
July 17, 2015

Just very briefly, I want to introduce everybody who have not had a chance to meet her. Ms. Emma Didlake is our oldest living veteran: 110 years old, born in 1905, and served with distinction and honor and received all sorts of commendations for her service during World War II.

We are so grateful that she is here with us today. And it's a great reminder of not only the sacrifices that the greatest generation made on our behalf, but also the kind of trailblazing that our women veterans made, African American veterans who helped to integrate our Armed Services. We are very, very proud of them. That's why we've got to make sure we do right by them.

So it's a great honor to have her here.

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:30 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Former Liberian Regime of Charles Taylor
July 17, 2015

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to the former Liberian regime of Charles Taylor declared in Executive Order 13348 of July 22, 2004, is to continue in effect beyond July 22, 2015.

Although Liberia has made significant advances to promote democracy, and the Special Court for Sierra Leone convicted Charles Taylor for war crimes and crimes against humanity, the actions and policies of former Liberian President Charles Taylor and other persons, in particular their unlawful depletion of Liberian resources and their removal from Liberia and secreting of Liberian funds and property, still challenge Liberia's efforts to strengthen its

democracy and the orderly development of its political, administrative, and economic institutions and resources. These actions and policies continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to the former Liberian regime of Charles Taylor.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Weekly Address
July 18, 2015

This week, the United States and our international partners finally achieved something that decades of animosity has not: a deal that will prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. This deal will make America and the world safer and more secure. Still, you are going to hear a lot of overheated and often dishonest arguments about it in the weeks ahead. So today I want to take a moment to take those on one by one and explain what this deal does and what it means.

First, you'll hear some critics argue that this deal somehow makes it easier for Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon. Now, if you think it sounds strange that the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia, China, and some of the world's best nuclear scientists would agree to something like that, you are right. This deal actually closes off Iran's pathway to a nuclear weapon. Today, Iran has enough nuclear material to produce up to 10 nuclear weapons. With this deal, they'll have to ship 98 percent of that material out of the country, leaving them with a fraction of what it takes to make even one weapon. With this deal, they will have to repurpose two key nuclear facilities so they can't produce materials that could be used for a nuclear weapon. So this deal actually pushes Iran further away from a bomb. And there is a permanent prohibition on Iran ever having a nuclear weapon.

Second, you might hear from critics that Iran could just ignore everything that's required and do whatever they want, that they are inevitably going to cheat. Well, that criticism is wrong too. With this deal, we will have unprecedented, 24/7 monitoring of Iran's key nuclear facilities. With this deal, international inspectors will have access to Iran's entire nuclear supply chain. The verification process set up by this deal is comprehensive, and it is intrusive, precisely so we can make sure Iran keeps its commitments.

Third, you might hear from critics that Iran faces no consequences if it violates this deal. That is also patently false. If Iran violates this deal, the sanctions we imposed that have helped cripple the Iranian economy—the sanctions that helped make this deal possible—would snap back into place promptly.

There's a reason this deal took so long to negotiate: because we refused to accept a bad deal. We held out for a deal that met every one of our bottom lines. And we got it.

Does this deal resolve all of the threats Iran poses to its neighbors and the world? No. Does it do more than anyone has done before to make sure Iran does not obtain a nuclear weapon? Yes. And that was our top priority from the start. That's why it's in everyone's best interest to make sure this deal holds. Because without this deal, there would be no limits on Iran's nuclear program. There would be no monitoring, no inspections. The sanctions we rallied the world to impose would unravel. Iran could move closer to a nuclear weapon. Other countries in the region might race to do the same. And we'd risk another war in the most volatile region in the world. That's what would happen without this deal.

On the questions of war and peace, we should have tough, honest, serious debates.

We've seen what happens when we don't. That's why this deal is online for the whole world to see. I welcome all scrutiny, fear no questions. As Commander in Chief, I make no apology for keeping this country safe and secure through the hard work of diplomacy over the easy rush to war. And on Tuesday, I will continue to press this case when I address the national convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Because nobody understands the true cost of war better than those who have actually served in this country's uniform.

We have before us a historic opportunity to pursue a safer, more secure world for our children. It might not come around again in our lifetimes. That's why we are going to seize it today and keep America a beacon of hope, liberty, and leadership for generations to come.

Thank you, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 1:55 p.m. on July 17 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on July 18. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 17, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on July 18.

Statement on the Death of George E. Cooper
July 19, 2015

Michelle and I were saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. George Cooper, the Executive Director of the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). As a native of Tallahassee, FL, George's love of education and HBCUs began as a student at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, continuing his education at Tuskegee University and receiving his Ph.D. at the University of Illinois at Urbana. George spent the majority of his life ensuring that students at our Nation's HBCUs were receiving a quality education and had the necessary resources to succeed and make their communities and our country better. He served on the faculty at several universities, including Alabama A&M University, Tuskegee University, and as president of South Carolina State University. His service extended beyond working with students at institutions. For 17 years, he worked with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, ensuring that HBCUs and other minority-serving institutions were receiving adequate resources to strengthen research and academic programs. George's passing is a great loss for my administration, the HBCU and higher education communities, and for everyone that knew him. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Diane, family, and friends during this difficult time.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria and an Exchange With Reporters
July 20, 2015

President Obama. Well, it's a great pleasure to welcome President Buhari and his delegation here to the Oval Office for his first visit since the historic election that took place.

Nigeria is obviously one of the important countries in the world and one of the most important countries in the African Continent. Recently, we saw an election in which a peaceful transition to a new Government took place. And it was an affirmation of Nigeria's commitment to democracy, a recognition that although Nigeria is a big country and a diverse country with many different parts, nevertheless, the people of Nigeria understand that only through a peaceful political process can change take place.

President Buhari comes into office with a reputation for integrity and a very clear

agenda, and that is to make sure that he is being—bringing safety and security and peace to his country. He's very concerned about the spread of Boko Haram and the violence that's taken place there and the atrocities that they've carried out and has a very clear agenda in defeating Boko Haram and extremism of all sorts inside of his country. And he has a very clear agenda with respect to rooting out the corruption that too often has held back the economic growth and prosperity of his country.

On both these issues, we're looking forward to hearing more about his plans and how the United States can partner with Nigeria so that Nigeria ends up being an anchor not only of prosperity and stability in the eastern part of the continent, but can also be an outstanding role model for developing countries around the world.

And we very much look forward to talking about security issues, how we can cooperate on counterterrorism. We're looking forward to discussing how we can be helpful in addressing some of the corruption issues that have held Nigeria back and unleashing the incredible talent of the Nigerian people. We all recognize that some of the best businesspeople in the world are from Nigeria, and they thrive as they travel to other countries, but we want to make sure that they're also helping folks thrive in Nigeria.

We're also going to have an opportunity to talk about some of the other areas where Nigeria has taken leadership: in public health issues, fighting tragedies like Ebola. Nigeria has an outstanding track record of working with us to eradicate polio, and that gives us a framework and a template to continue to work on public health issues throughout the western part of Africa, as well as throughout the subcontinent.

We'll have a chance to talk about issues of climate change, electrification. As many of you know, Power Africa is one of our top priorities, making sure that we're electrifying the continent so that it can grow faster and more people have access to the power that they need.

So we've got a busy agenda, but I want to emphasize how much I appreciate President Buhari's work so far. I'm looking forward to seeing him put together his team so that we can do everything that we can to help him succeed and help the people of Nigeria succeed. Because if they're successful and doing well, that will have a ripple effect not only in West Africa, but throughout the world.

So thank you very much.

Mr. President. Thank you.

President Buhari. Nigeria will remain ever grateful to President Obama and the United States for backing Nigeria to consolidate its gains on a democratic system. The visit of the Secretary of State, when he visited Nigeria to see the President, the former President of Nigeria, see the Chairman of Independent National Electoral Commission for Nigeria, and saw the operation was very clear and a positive trend that saw us through for this credible election we had.

And the maintenance of pressure by United States, mainly, and Europe, to make sure that the elections were free, fair, and credible led us to where we are now. It would have been almost impossible if United States did not maintain the pressure on the former Nigerian Government, that they would not accept anything less constituted as far as the processes of the election are concerned. We will ever remain grateful to you because other than the—other three fundamental objectives that our party identified, the All Nigeria People's Congress, on that—security, economy, the employment especially of youth, and then fighting corruption.

We are extremely happy that United States had made it absolutely clear well before the elections that they are prepared to help Nigeria in this aspect. And this is why I am here, and I am very grateful for the invitation Mr. President extended to me.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

President Obama. Thank you so much.

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action To Prevent Iran From Obtaining a Nuclear Weapon

Q. Mr. President, the Security Council approved the deal. Will that help you in Congress?

President Obama. I think it will send a clear message that the overwhelming number of countries who not only participated in the deal, the P5-plus-1, but who have observed what's happened, recognize that this is by far our strongest approach to ensuring that Iran does not get a nuclear weapon. There is broad international consensus around this issue, not just among the international community, but also among experts in nuclear proliferation. And my working assumption is, is that Congress will pay attention to the broad-based consensus. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:14 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, President Buhari referred to former President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria; and former Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission for Nigeria Attahiru Muhammadu Jega.

Remarks on the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act
July 20, 2015

The President. Hello, everybody! Well, welcome to the White House. And thank you so much, Haben, for that amazing introduction and for working to make sure that students with disabilities get a world-class education, just like you have. So please give Haben a big round of applause.

So, on a sunny day 25 years ago—I don't know if it was as hot as it is today—[*laughter*]—President George H.W. Bush stood on the South Lawn and declared a new American independence day. "With today's signing of the landmark Americans [with] Disabilities Act," he said, "every man, woman, and child with a disability can now pass through once-closed doors into a bright new era of equality, freedom, and independence."

Twenty-five years later, we come together to celebrate that groundbreaking law and all that the law has made possible. Thanks to the ADA, the places that comprise our shared American life—schools, workplaces, movie theaters, courthouses, buses, baseball stadiums, national parks—they truly belong to everyone. Millions of Americans with disabilities have had the chance to develop their talents and make their unique contributions to the world. And thanks to them, America is stronger and more vibrant; it is a better country because of the ADA. That's what this law has achieved.

So today we honor those who made the ADA the law of the land, many of whom are here today. Tom Harkin—[*applause*]—Tom Harkin is in the back there, and he—Tom delivered speeches in sign language on the Senate floor in favor of this law, in part inspired by his brother Frank.

Bob Dole is here. A war hero whose combat-related disability informed the way he advocated for all Americans with disabilities.

Tony Coelho—[*applause*]—told he couldn't become a priest because of his epilepsy, so he became a Congressman instead—[*laughter*]—and helped to pass the ADA so fewer Americans would find the word "no" being an obstacle to their dreams.

In the 1970s, Judy Heumann helped lead the longest sit-in at a Federal building in U.S. history, in support of disability rights. Today, she's at the State Department, advocating for people with disabilities worldwide. She and all the others I mentioned deserve America's thanks for their tireless efforts.

I want to thank some of the activists who are here, folks like Ricardo Thornton and Tia Nelis. In 1999, the Supreme Court ruled that institutionalizing people with disabilities—isolating them, keeping them apart from the rest of the community—is not just wrong, it is illegal. Ricardo and Tia have pushed to make sure that ruling is enforced. And I am proud of what my administration has done to ensure that people with disabilities are treated like the valuable members of the communities that they are.

And I want to thank all the Members of Congress and members of my administration who are here today, including our outstanding Secretary of Labor, Tom Perez, and the White

House's fantastic new Disability Community Liaison, Maria Town is here. [*Applause*] Yay, Maria!

Now, days like today are a celebration of our history. But they're also a chance to rededicate ourselves to the future, to address the injustices that still linger, to remove the barriers that remain.

The ADA offered millions of people the opportunity to earn a living and help support their families. But we all know too many people with disabilities are still unemployed, even though they can work, even though they want to work, even though they have so much to contribute. In some cases, it's a lack of access to skills training. In some cases, it's an employer that can't see all that these candidates for a job have to offer. Maybe sometimes, people doubt their own self-worth after experiencing a lifetime of discouragement and expectations that were too low. Whatever the reason, we've got to do better. Our country cannot let all that incredible talent go to waste.

A few years ago, I issued an Executive order requiring the Federal Government to hire more Americans with disabilities. And in part because of that Executive order, today, more people with disabilities are working with us than at any point in the last 30 years. Some of these folks are some of my closest colleagues and have been incredible leaders on behalf of the administration on a whole host of issues, and I'm grateful for their contributions every single day.

And we've strengthened the rules for Federal contractors to make sure they have plans in place for hiring people with disabilities. I'm hoping more employers follow suit, because Americans with disabilities can do the job, and they're hungry for the chance, and they will make you proud if you give them the chance.

The ADA also made our more—made our Government more responsive to Americans with disabilities. But we've still got more to do to live up to our responsibilities. My administration created the first office within FEMA dedicated to disability, so that when disaster strikes, we're prepared to help everybody, including those with physical or mental conditions requiring extra help. And we created the first Special Adviser for International Disability Rights at the State Department, because this is not just about American rights, it's about human rights, and that's something our Nation has to stand for.

So we've still got to do more to make sure that people with disabilities are paid fairly for their labor, to make sure they are safe in their homes and their communities, to make sure they have access to technology, including high-speed Internet, that allows for their full participation in this 21st-century economy. We've still got to do more to make sure that children with disabilities get every opportunity to learn and acquire the skills and the sense of self-worth that will last a lifetime. That is our most sacred charge. And we need Republicans and Democrats in Congress to make sure we have a budget that lets us keep that promise and keep that commitment.

So I don't have to tell you, this fight is not over.

Audience member. Oh, no.

The President. Oh, no. [*Laughter*] But we're building a stronger foundation. And thanks to generations of Americans who fought for better laws, who demanded better treatment, who in—by just being good and decent people and effective workers and working hard every day and treating others with respect and asking the same in return, folks have overcome ignorance and indifference and made our country better.

I'm thinking of folks like Hamza Jaka, who's here from Wisconsin with his mom. He gloated that he's a Packers fan—[*laughter*]—and they've been beating the Bears a lot lately. But Hamza has cerebral palsy. As he puts it, people always assume his condition must limit him. But the opposite is true. His disability has given him unique experiences and a sense of purpose that he cherishes. He traveled to Syria to meet other young people with disabilities, and together, they created a comic book featuring a Muslim superhero who uses a wheelchair called the "Silver Scorpion." [*Laughter*] This fall, he's starting law school, where he's going to learn how to be an even more effective advocate.

And then you've got somebody like Leah Katz-Hernandez. Leah is one of my favorites. [*Laughter*] She is—her smiling face is one of the first things that people see when they come into the White House. She is the West Wing receptionist. We call her ROTUS. [*Laughter*] I'm POTUS, this is VPOTUS, and that's ROTUS. [*Laughter*]

And ROTUS is the first deaf American to hold that job. She is poised, she is talented, and as she puts it, a lot of her accomplishments may not have been possible without the ADA.

And just on a very practical level, this law meant she could ask for sign language interpretation on job interviews, very straight forward. But without this law and without enforcement of the law, those things don't happen. On a deeper level, the fact that the ADA was passed a few years after Leah was born opened possibilities to her that previous generations didn't always have. She says that, thanks to this law, "I grew up knowing I was equal, not subhuman."

And I've told this story before, but whenever I think about the ADA, I think about my father-in-law Fraser Robinson, who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in his early thirties. By the time I knew him, he needed crutches to get around. He was holding down a job and raising a family at a time where the ADA had not yet been passed. He never missed a day at work. He had to wake up an hour earlier than everybody else just to put on his shirt, just to get dressed, just to get down to the job, but he was never going to be late.

If he went to his son's basketball games, he and the family would have to get there 45 minutes early because he didn't want to interrupt people as he climbed one stair at a time on crutches so that he could cheer on his son. Same thing if he went to Michelle's dance receptions. And just through the power of his example, he opened a lot of people's eyes, including mine, to some of the obstacles that folks with disabilities faced and how important it is that the rest of us do our part to remove those obstacles.

And just an aside on this, for a long time, he would not get a motorized wheelchair because he had gotten this disability at a time when they weren't available and it was expensive and they weren't wealthy and insurance didn't always cover it. And it just gave you a sense of—Michelle and I would talk sometimes about how much more he could have done, how much more he could have seen. As wonderful as a dad as he was and as wonderful as a coworker as he was, he was very cautious about what he could and couldn't do, not because he couldn't do it, but because he didn't want to inconvenience his family and he didn't want to be seen as somehow holding things up.

And that's what, even for folks who had amazing will, was the nature of having a disability before this law was passed. It wasn't just physical obstacles. It was also constraining how people thought about what they should or should not do. And that's why this is personal. That's why it's so important for us to remember what this law means. That's what today is all about. We've got to tear down barriers externally, but we also have to tear down barriers internally. That's our responsibility as Americans, and it's our responsibility as fellow human beings.

As long as I've got the privilege of serving as your President, I'm going to make sure every single day that I'm working alongside you to tear down those barriers. I know Joe Biden is going to be doing the same. And I am going to make sure that when we look back at—18 months from now, we're going to say we have made some significant advances. And once I'm no longer President, I'm going to keep on pushing as well.

So thank you, everybody. God bless you. Proud of you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:33 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Haben Girma, Skadden Fellowship attorney, Disability Rights Advocates; former Sens. Thomas R. Harkin and Robert J. Dole; and former Rep. Anthony L. Coelho. He also referred to his brother-in-law Craig M. Robinson. The related proclamation of July 24 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
July 21, 2015

Thank you. Please, please, have a seat. Hello, VFW!

Thank you, Commander Stroud. John, as you complete your tenure, we want to thank you for your service to the Air Force, to the VFW, and to our Nation. And I look forward to working with your next commander, John Biedrzycki, a proud Army veteran, and as always, your outstanding executive director and Vietnam vet, Bob Wallace, who's doing a great job.

I'd ask you all to join me in saluting Ladies Auxiliary President Ann Panteleakos; your next president, Francisca Guilford; and everybody in the Ladies Auxiliary, because our military families serve right alongside those in uniform.

I want to acknowledge Mayor Bill Peduto, our host here in Pittsburgh; County Executive Rich Fitzgerald; and the people of Pittsburgh, who are hosting us in their beautiful city. And I'm pleased to be joined by our Secretary of Veterans Affairs, who you just heard from, Bob McDonald.

Like a true Army Airborne Ranger, Bob is tireless. Like the outstanding business leader that he is, he's bringing new reforms to the VA. At one press conference, Bob even gave out his personal cell phone number. Call him anytime, he said. I think he got some calls. On behalf of all of us, I want to thank you, Bob, for you outstanding service.

So it is a great honor to be back with the VFW. And I want to start with the simple message: Thank you. As so many of you remember, there was a time, back during the draft, when virtually every American had, at some point, a loved one or a friend in the military. Today, it's an All-Volunteer Force. So a lot of folks don't always have direct contact with our troops and with our veterans. One of the great privileges of my office is that I do. And that's why, as President, I consider it my obligation to help make sure that, even though less than 1 percent of Americans wear the uniform, that 100 percent of Americans honor your sacrifices and your service.

As we mark the 70th anniversary of the second end of the—or the end of the Second World War, I want to offer a special salute to all of our World War II veterans. As communities across our country continue to mark 50 years since the Vietnam War, we say once more, welcome to all our Vietnam vets. As I think you heard this morning, we have new—a new POW/MIA agency, new leadership. We're building stronger partnerships with veterans' groups like the VFW. Because bringing home Americans taken prisoner or who've gone missing is a sacred mission, and we are stepping up our efforts for all wars, to never leave a fallen comrade behind—ever.

VFW, when I took office, you were the very first veterans' convention I addressed, and I talked with you about how we needed a new vision of American leadership in the world. For too long, there had been a mindset where the first instinct when facing a challenge in the world was to send in our military. And we have the greatest military in human history. But we learned, painfully, where that kind of thinking can lead; that rushing into war without thinking through the consequences and going it alone without broad international support, getting drawn into unnecessary conflicts and spreading our military too thin actually too often would play into the hands of our enemies. That's what they wanted us to do.

And who paid the price? Our men and women in uniform. Our wounded warriors. Our fallen heroes who never come home. Their families, who carry that loss forever.

And so I said then that our brave troops and their families deserve better. We cannot expect our military to bear the entire burden of our national security alone. Everybody has to support our national security.

And so today, we're pursuing a new kind of leadership, a smarter, broader vision of American strength, one that relies not only on our

outstanding military, but on all elements of our national power. And that starts with the recognition that our strength in the world depends on our economic strength here at home. And as Americans, we can be proud of the progress we've achieved together. We've now seen more than five straight years of private sector job growth, nearly 13 million new jobs, which is the longest streak on record. The unemployment rate is near the lowest level in 7 years. American manufacturing, our auto industry are booming. Our exports—Made in America—have been at record levels. And wages for American workers are finally rising.

The stock market has more than doubled, which has restored 401(k)s for millions of Americans. More than 16 million Americans have gained quality, affordable health care who didn't have it before. We are producing more American energy here at home, which is reducing our dependence on foreign oil. And we've done all this while we've cut the deficit by two-thirds. So that's progress, that's strength, and that's American leadership. That serves as the foundation for our national security.

And real leadership also means using our power wisely, especially our military. That's why we refocused our fight in Afghanistan, pushed back the Taliban, trained up Afghan forces so they could take the lead for their own security. Today, we can say that our combat mission in Afghanistan is over. We brought America's longest war to a responsible end. And we salute every member of this 9/11 generation who has sacrificed to keep us safe.

Now, as Commander in Chief, my greatest responsibility is ensuring the security of the United States in what is still a dangerous world. And that means keeping our military strong. Yes, our Armed Forces are drawing down after two major wars, but some of the reckless budget cuts, under the name of sequestration, that's going on in Washington right now, that's not the way to keep our Armed Forces ready or to take care of our troops and their families. Or to keep America strong with the education and infrastructure and research and development that we need to thrive. These mindless cuts have to end.

There are two ways forward right now. On the one hand, we can keep this sequester, trying to fund our military with gimmicks, shortchange national security programs like counterterrorism, increase risk to our troops. Now, I've got to be honest, that's what the Republican budget does. But I've got a better idea, which is to end sequestration, increase the defense budget, invest in America's strengths. And I'm calling on Republican leaders in Congress to come to the table with Democrats, sit down, negotiate a budget that protects our national security and our economic security.

We shouldn't be playing partisan politics when it comes to national security. There's no good reason we can't get it done. And I've said I will veto any budget that locks in the sequester. It is not good for our country.

Now, every ally and every adversary needs to know around the world the United States has and will continue to have the strongest, most capable fighting force the world has ever known. No one can match our Army, the greatest land force on Earth. Nobody can match our Navy, the largest and most advanced battle fleet in the world, or our Coast Guard, safeguarding our shores and ports. Nobody can match our Air Force; its reach and precision are unequalled. Nobody can match our Marine Corps, the world's only global expeditionary force. Nobody can match our special operations forces, our remarkable, quiet professionals.

And I've shown I will not hesitate to use force to protect our Nation, including from the threat of terrorism. Thanks to the skill of our military and counterintelligence professionals, we've struck major blows against those who threaten us. Usama bin Laden is gone. Anwar Awlaki, a leader of the Al Qaida affiliate in Yemen, gone. Many of Al Qaida's deputies and their replacements, gone. Ahmed Abdi Godane, the leader of the Al Qaida affiliate in Somalia, gone. Abu Anas al-Libi, accused of bombing our Embassies in Africa, captured. Ahmed Abu Khattalah, accused in the attack in Benghazi, captured. The list goes on. If you

target Americans, you will have no safe haven. We will defend our Nation.

When threats emerge, real leadership means the United States rallies the world to action. We're stronger when we stand with allies and partners. No other nation in the world can match the alliances that we have. It's another source of our strength; it's a force multiplier. And I want to take the opportunity to commend Prime Minister David Cameron and our great British allies and their friends, their recent decision to increase their defense spending to 2 percent. That's what every NATO ally should do. They've got to meet their commitments to our collective security so that we stand together.

When we stand together, things happen. Right now we've got a coalition of some 40 nations in Afghanistan. The war may be over that we—that our ground troops fight, but that country is still dangerous. So we'll persevere in our new mission, which is training and assisting Afghan forces, remaining relentless in our counterterrorism operations against Al Qaida.

Likewise, we stand together—a coalition of some 60 nations, including Arab partners—in the fight against ISIL. I firmly believe that the United States should not be engaged in another major ground war in the Middle East. That's not good for our national security, and it's not good for our military. But what we can do and what we are doing is to pound ISIL from the air—more than 50,000 [5,000]* air strikes so far—while training and supporting local forces on the ground in Iraq and Syria as they fight to push ISIL back.

Recent losses on the battlefield show that ISIL can be defeated. We're a long way from being finished. I've said this is a long campaign; it will take time. But have no doubt, we will degrade and ultimately destroy this barbaric terrorist organization. We've got the coalition, and we've got right on our side, and it will happen.

At the same time, we have to remain vigilant in protecting our homeland. Our law enforcement and homeland security professionals are tireless. They've arrested individuals across our country for attempting to join ISIL or for plotting terrorism. They've thwarted attacks; they've saved American lives.

We don't yet know all the details behind the attack in Chattanooga, but we do know that Al Qaida and ISIL have encouraged attacks on American soil, including against our servicemembers. And this threat of lone wolves and small cells is hard to detect and prevent. So our entire Government—along with State and local partners—we are going to keep doing everything in our power to protect the American people, including our men and women in uniform.

And we honor our five servicemembers killed so senselessly in Chattanooga. We are grateful to the courageous police who stopped the rampage and saved lives. And we draw strength from yet another American community that has come together with an unmistakable message to those who would try to do us harm: We will not give in to fear. You cannot divide Americans. You can never change our way of life or the values of freedom and diversity that make us Americans.

Now, as we defend our Nation, real leadership also means something else: having the courage to lead in a new direction, the wisdom to move beyond policies that haven't worked in the past, having the confidence to engage in smart, principled diplomacy that can lead to a better future.

That's what we're doing in Cuba, where the new chapter between our peoples will mean more opportunities for the Cuban people. Today, with our American Embassy open in Havana for the first time in 50 years, we reaffirm that we will speak out for freedom and universal values around the world.

But we're not scared to engage. We also see the strength of American diplomacy in our comprehensive nuclear deal with Iran, because we must prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. And we're now engaged in an important debate, which is a good thing. We are a democracy. Unfortunately, you may have no-

* White House correction.

ticed, there's already a lot of shaky information out there. So, even as I make the case of why this is a critical deal to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, we're going to make sure the people know the facts. And here are some basic facts.

With this deal, we cut off every single one of Iran's pathways to a nuclear program. Iran is prohibited from pursuing a nuclear weapon permanently. Without a deal, those paths remain open and Iran could move closer to a nuclear bomb. With this deal, we gain unprecedented access to Iran's nuclear facilities and monitor them 24/7. Without a deal, we don't get that. With this deal, if Iran cheats, sanctions snap back on. Without a deal, the sanctions unravel. With this deal, we have a chance to resolve the challenge of Iran trying to get a nuclear weapon, peacefully. Without it, we risk yet another conflict in the Middle East.

Now, if Iran tries to get a bomb despite this agreement—10 years from now or 20 years from now—the American President will be in a stronger position to take whatever additional steps are necessary, including any option of military action, to prevent that from happening. And those are the facts. That's the choice. And for the sake of our national security and the sake of future generations, we need to make the right choice on this critical issue.

And I also want to make a broader point. In the debate over this deal, we're hearing the echoes of some of the same policies and mindset that failed us in the past. And some of the same politicians and pundits that are so quick to reject the possibility of a diplomatic solution to Iran's nuclear program are the same folks who were so quick to go to war in Iraq and said it would take a few months. And we know the consequences of that choice, of what it cost us in blood and treasure.

So I believe there's a smarter, more responsible way to protect our national security, and that is what we are doing. Instead of dismissing the rest of the world and going it alone, we've done the hard and patient work of uniting the international community to meet a common threat. Instead of chest-beating that rejects even the idea of talking to our adversaries—which sometimes sounds good in sound bites, but accomplishes nothing—we're seeing that strong and principled diplomacy can give hope of actually resolving a problem peacefully.

Instead of rushing into another conflict, I believe that sending our sons and daughters into harm's way must always be a last resort and that before we put their lives on the line, we should exhaust every alternative. That's what we owe our troops. That is strength, and that is American leadership.

Of course, even with this deal, we'll continue to have serious differences with the Iranian Government: its support of terrorism, proxies that destabilize the Middle East. So we can't let them off the hook. Our sanctions for Iran's support for terrorism and its ballistic missile program and its human rights violations, those sanctions will remain in place. And we will stand with allies and partners, including Israel, to oppose Iran's dangerous behavior.

And we are not going to relent until we bring home our Americans who are unjustly detained in Iran. Journalist Jason Rezaian should be released. Pastor Saeed Abedini should be released. Amir Hekmati, a former sergeant in the U.S. Marine Corps, should be released. Iran needs to help us find Robert Levinson. These Americans need to be back home with their families.

There's one more aspect of American leadership I want to discuss because, even more than sending Americans to war, real strength is measured by how we take care of our veterans when you come home. VFW, working together, we've made real progress. We've won historic increases in veterans funding. We've made VA benefits available to more than 2 million veterans who didn't have them before, including more Vietnam vets exposed to agent orange. That was a commitment I made when I ran for office, we're keeping that commitment.

We're devoting unprecedented resources for mental health care. We've helped more than 1.4 million veterans and their families pursue their education under the post-9/11 GI bill. We've reduced the number of homeless veterans by about a third. We're helping more

veterans and military spouses find good civilian jobs. And the veterans' unemployment rate continues to go down; it's now lower than the national average. And that's all good news.

When problems arise, we work to fix them. Here in Pittsburgh, an outbreak of Legionnaire's disease at the VA a few years ago killed six veterans and infected others. That was a tragedy, and whenever there are any missteps, there is no excuse. So our hearts go out to the families of those who have lost loved ones. And know that there is new leadership now at the Pittsburgh VA. The safety measures now in place are some of the strongest in the Nation, and patient safety is a top priority at VA hospitals, because we have to prevent anything like that from ever happening again.

Last year, of course, the full magnitude of broader problems also came to light: long wait times, veterans denied care, some people inexcusably cooking the books. It was unacceptable. And I made it clear I wanted those problems fixed. I brought in Bob McDonald, and I went down to the Phoenix VA to see and hear for myself. I know Bob gave you an update earlier. The VA reached out to vets across the country to get them off those wait lists and in for care. Bob is bringing energetic new leadership. He is working to hold people accountable and make sure the whistleblowers are protected instead of punished.

With the new resources of the Choice Act, the VA has hired thousands of new physicians, nurses, staff. They're opening more clinics. So to all the veterans who spoke up, I want you to know we heard you; we changed the rule. Now, if it takes you more than 40 miles to drive to a VA facility, we'll help you go to a doctor outside of the VA.

Today, the VA is handling millions more appointments, inside and outside the VA, and delivering more care. On average, veterans are waiting just a few days for an appointment. And that's all good news. Veterans continue to tell us that once they get through the door, the care is often very good.

A lot of folks across the VA, many of them veterans themselves, work hard every single day to do right by our veterans, and we thank them. But we've got to acknowledge, our work is not done; we still have a big challenge. Even with all these new resources, the VA is still struggling to keep up with the surge of veterans who are seeking care.

The fact is, our veterans are getting older. With the end of the most recent wars, more veterans are now coming home. Our veterans are seeking more care. Our veterans are getting the new lifesaving treatment for hepatitis C. You put it all together, and in some places, wait times are higher than they were last year.

So I want you to know, I'm still not satisfied, Bob is still not satisfied. We are focused on this at the highest levels. We are not going to let up. And we're going to keep pushing forward on the five priorities of our veterans agenda.

Number one, we're going to keep fighting for the resources you need. And to help deal with this surge, we've sent an urgent request to Congress: Give the VA more flexibility so it can move funds to where they're needed most right now.

I'm calling on Congress to approve this request quickly, this month. Our vets need it, and our hospitals need it. And let me just add, we've protected VA funding from sequestration in the past, and I've proposed another increase in veterans funding for next year. And I would point out that the Republican budget falls short, and it's another reminder that the best way to protect VA funding going forward—and, VFW, we need you to keep raising your voice on this—is to get rid of sequestration for good. That's how we're going to make sure that our veterans have the resources they need.

Number two, we're going to keep fighting to make sure you actually get the health care you've been promised. We'll keep improving care for our growing number of proud women veterans. We've got to make good on the promise of the Clay Hunt Act: improving care for veterans with posttraumatic stress, increasing outreach and peer support, and recruiting more psychiatrists and mental health counselors. We've got to make sure veterans who are already struggling don't fall through the cracks.

And we've also got to end the stigma and shame around mental health once and for all. And every American can help by learning the five signs that someone may be hurting so we can all reach out. Our troops and veterans were there for us. We need to be there for them a hundred percent. We've all got a role to play.

Number three, we're going to keep cutting the disability claims backlog. I can report that since its peak 2 years ago, we've now cut the backlog by 80 percent—by 80 percent. And we're going to keep bringing it down. Instead of all that paper, the VA is now handling almost all your disability claims electronically.

And by the way, the accuracy of claims is up as well. But I know that it still has taken too long to get a final answer on your appeals. So one of our next missions has to be fundamental reform of the claims appeals process so that it works for you, our veterans, and you can actually get answers faster—final answers faster. We've recruited some of the best talent from Silicon Valley and the private sector. We're going to put them on the case.

Number four, we'll keep fighting to uphold the dignity of every veteran, and that includes ending veterans' homelessness. As part of their Joining Forces initiative, Michelle and Jill Biden are helping to lead the charge. And they've teamed up with hundreds of elected officials: Governors, mayors, local leaders.

New Orleans and Houston have become the first cities to effectively end veterans' homelessness. They deserve their congratulations for that. We're seeing major progress in cities like Salt Lake City and Louisville. So this has become a national movement. And we stand by our pledge: We are going to keep at it until every veteran who has fought for America has a place to call home in America.

And finally, we're going to keep fighting to give our troops and veterans every chance to enjoy the American Dream you helped defend. Now, there's already a law to protect our troops and military families against unscrupulous predatory lenders. But I have to tell you, some of the worst abusers, like payday lenders, are exploiting loopholes to trap our troops in a vicious cycle of crushing debt. So today we're taking a new step. The Defense Department is closing these loopholes so we can protect our men and women in uniform from predatory lenders. It is the right thing to do.

And since today also marks 5 years since I signed historic Wall Street reform into law, let me say I will not accept any efforts to roll back this law or its strong protections for our economy and the American people, including our military families.

And we're going to keep helping our newest veterans transition to civilian life. All 50 States have now taken steps to recognize the skills of our veterans when issuing civilian credentials and licenses. So we've got to make sure these laws are working so our veterans actually get those credentials. We'll keep helping our veterans and their families choose the school that's right for them under the post-9/11 GI bill, and that now includes the surviving spouses of our fallen heroes.

In 43 States, veterans now pay in-State tuition. We're working to make sure that happens in all 50 States. I don't know what the other seven States think they're doing. We've got to go ahead and make that happen.

We'll keep partnering with communities that step up and welcome our veterans home with jobs and opportunities that are worthy of their skills. And as long as I'm President, I'm going to keep telling every business in America: If you want somebody to get the job done, hire a vet. Hire a veteran, because they know what sacrifice means and duty means and responsibility means.

Let's do more nation-building here at home. That's part of our strength, part of our American leadership.

VFW, as I look around this auditorium, I see that the love of country and the devotion to duty spans the generations. And that spirit endures in those who wear the uniform today. We saw that, once again, last week in Chattanooga.

Back in Massachusetts, Tom Sullivan cheered for his Boston teams. In battle, said a comrade, Sully "was just everything that a marine should be." In two tours in Iraq, he earned a Combat Action Ribbon; for his wounds, two Purple

Hearts. When he was warned that a gunman was there in Chattanooga, he ran in, so that others could live. Today we echo the words of his community: Gunnery Sergeant Thomas J. Sullivan "was our hero and he will never be forgotten." "Thank you . . . for protecting us."

Growing up in Georgia, Skip Wells was a true servant leader: devoted to God and to his friends, quick to lend a hand or put you on his prayer list. During his hometown's Fourth of July parade, he was so proud to be a marine that he went in his dress uniform. Just 21 years old, a year out of boot camp, easy going, always smiling, even during the hardest drills. A friend said, "Skip is the kind of kid you want on your team." As Americans, we are forever grateful that Lance Corporal Squire K. Wells was on our team.

As an Eagle Scout in Arkansas, David Wyatt would race up a mountain to be the first on top. He was determined to do his part for our country, found his calling in the Marines. He led with courage in Afghanistan and Iraq and with compassion, as a mentor to comrades with posttraumatic stress. It's said he was a "gentleman and a gentle man." And no one knew that better than his wife Lorri and their two young children. Today, we see, as they did, why a friend would say that Staff Sergeant David A. Wyatt was "the kind of man this country needs more of."

Back home, Carson Holmquist was an embodiment of the spirit of Grantsburg, Wisconsin, population, 1,300. Loved country music, loved to fish, to hunt, to play football. And he loved the Marines, showing up at his old high school in his dress blues. He, too, served in Afghanistan; was devoted to his family, his wife Jasmine and their 2-year-old son. Said his old coach, Carson "always did the best he could." Today, our Nation is stronger because America saw the best of Sergeant Carson A. Holmquist.

And in his hometown in Ohio, Randall Smith is remembered as the high school baseball star with the fierce pitch. He was a fun and outgoing guy—the guy, they said, you just wanted to be around. His buddies in the Navy knew it—he had just reenlisted—and his family knew it too: his wife Angie, who called—who he liked to call "the most beautiful woman in the world," and their young daughters, who he called his "little princesses." Today, we join the people of Paulding, Ohio—including VFW Post 587, with five flags flying—in honor of Navy Petty Officer 2d Class Randall S. Smith.

VFW, our Nation endures because citizens like you put on the uniform and serve to keep us free. We endure because your families serve and stay strong on the home front. We endure because the freedoms and values you protected are now defended by a new generation, Americans just like our five patriots who gave their lives in Chattanooga. As a grateful nation, we must stand up for them and honor them, now and forever.

God bless these American heroes. God bless all our troops and all of our veterans. God bless the United States of America.

Thank you, VFW. We're proud of what you do.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. at the David Lawrence Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Rich Fitzgerald, county executive, Alleghany County, PA; Michael S. Linnington, Director, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency; Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden; Barbara Forsha, interim director, VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System; Mohammod Youssuf Abdulazeez, suspected gunman in the shootings at the military facilities in Chattanooga, TN, on July 16; Heith Wyatt and Rebecca Wyatt, children of S. Sgt. David A. Wyatt, USMC, who was killed in the July 16 shooting at the Naval Operational Support Center in Chattanooga; and Wyatt A. Holmquist, son of Sgt. Carson A. Holmquist, USMC, who was also killed in the July 16 shooting. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Transnational Criminal Organizations
July 21, 2015

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to transnational criminal organizations declared in Executive Order 13581 of July 24, 2011, is to continue in effect beyond July 24, 2015.

The activities of significant transnational criminal organizations have reached such scope and gravity that they threaten the stability of international political and economic systems. Such organizations are becoming increasingly sophisticated and dangerous to the United States; they are increasingly entrenched in the operations of foreign governments and the international financial system, thereby weakening democratic institutions, degrading the rule of law, and undermining economic markets. These organizations facilitate and aggravate violent civil conflicts and increasingly facilitate the activities of other dangerous persons.

The activities of significant transnational criminal organizations continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13581 with respect to transnational criminal organizations.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
July 21, 2015.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Fundraiser in New York City
July 21, 2015

Thank you, everybody. Well, I want to thank, first of all, Jeff and Paula, who have just been long-time supporters and friends. I am so grateful to them. To the whole Katz family, we are so grateful to you.

And the stories of Lew Katz's generosity and what he's done for people who really needed a break, I think epitomizes what America is all about. And I can only imagine how excited he is to have a new granddaughter coming, and knowing that his legacy, his good name, all the great work that he did is going to be passing on to the next generation. So thank you. Thank you so much to all of you for helping to set this up.

I want to make sure people know Tom Lopach, who's heading up the DSCC. He's flying solo tonight because the Senators had to vote, and so duty called. So they called in me as a stand-in, basically. [*Laughter*] They figured maybe I could make the pitch, probably not as well as Chuck Schumer can, but I'm going to do my best.

In small settings like this, I like to spend most of my time in a conversation, and so I'm not going to make a long speech at the front. But I want to build on what Jeff said because it bears not just on the recent path, but on the future.

When I came into office, we were going through the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. And over the last 6½ years, not only have we taken the unemployment rate from 10 percent down to 5.4, creating close to 13 million jobs, over 5 years of consecutive job growth, an alltime record; not only did the stock market double, helping people with 401(k)s make sure that their retirement accounts hadn't been completely devastated; not only have we provided 16 million people with health care who didn't have it before, and by the way, driven health care inflation down to its lowest level in 50 years; not only have we doubled the production of clean energy, increased solar energy by 20 percent, reduced the pace of our carbon emissions, doubled fuel efficiency standards in cars, produced more traditional energy than ever before so that we're weaning ourselves off of foreign oil and doing something about climate change, which is going to be a critical issue for Drew and Rachel's daughter, and all our children and our grandchildren; but we did all that while cutting the deficit by two-thirds.

We've ended two wars. We have reestablished our alliances around the world in ways that make them stronger than they ever have been before. High school reading, high school graduation, college attendance—on almost every metric, the country is significantly better off than we were when I came into office.

Now that, apropos of Jeff's friend, I guess I'd like to take credit for all of that. But actually, he's on to something. The President, despite the office, despite the big plane and the fancy helicopter and all the bike racks in Manhattan, the President is just one person. And the reason I was able to accomplish what we have been able to accomplish was because in the first 2 years of office I had a Congress that actually wanted to solve problems. I had a Congress that was willing to do tough things.

When we had to put a big slug of capital into the financial system to unlock it and to save the global economy, that was not popular, but we had people in office, in Congress at that time who were willing to responsible things even when it wasn't popular.

When we saved the auto industry, in Michigan that poll did about 10 percent. And as a consequence, now, we saved over a million jobs, and the auto industry is thriving like never before. But I couldn't do that alone. I did that because we had a Congress that was willing to do hard things.

And I want to be very clear. I'm an American, a father, a husband; there are a lot of titles I care about more than being a Democrat. And Democrats aren't perfect. But I will say this, that we have consistently been willing to do the right thing even when it's not expedient. And when you have a Democratic Congress, what you can count on is that when push comes to shove, and the question is, how are we going to make sure that the story of a Lew Katz replicates itself around this country, because there's some kid in Camden right now who's got talent. There's some kid up in the Bronx who's got drive. There's some young woman somewhere who's got an unbelievable idea for a business that could end up transforming our country. The question is, who's willing to work to make sure that we are giving those young people the opportunity they need to perpetuate this American dream?

And on issue after issue, that's where Democrats have been. That's what they've been willing to do: whether it's investing in early childhood education or rebuilding our infrastructure or making sure that we're investing in the research and development that keeps us at the cutting edge of innovation; whether it's making sure that people get paid the same if they're a woman as if they're a man for doing the same job; whether it's making sure that two people who love each other and are willing to make that commitment are able to marry.

On issue after issue, what we've shown is, is that when we have a Democratic Congress we make progress that ultimately benefits everybody, not just the folks who are down and out, not just the marginalized. Because when the economy is going good for folks at the bottom and in the middle, business turns out pretty good. Somebody is buying those cars right now, and it's not all the people in this room; it's a bunch of hard-working Americans out there.

And when they're given opportunity, not only do they benefit, but everybody benefits.

So I guess my pitch would be this. I will not be on the ballot again, and my wife is super happy about that. [*Laughter*] But I do care about legacy. And I mean that in the broad sense, not the narrow sense. I'm not talking about any particular program or particular initiative and wanting to make sure that it continues. I think about it in terms of, are we leaving behind the kind of politics that continues to nurture the American Dream and gives everybody in this economy a shot.

And to do that, we've got to have a Democratic Senate. We need a Democratic Congress to really do what we could accomplish in this country. And so I hope that at the end of this conversation that we have, you're persuaded that the stakes are high and that you can't just pay attention to the name at the top, but you have to pay attention to the folks who are really going to be carrying the laboring oar to help make sure we've got a team that is moving America forward.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:14 p.m. at the residence of Drew and Rachel Katz. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Small-Business Owners To Discuss Reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank of the United States
July 22, 2015

Well, I've just had the opportunity to hear from businesses all across the country to talk about the importance of reauthorizing the Export-Import Bank.

This is not an issue that typically rises to the front page of the newspapers, but for these businesses and for their employees and for the communities that they serve, this is vital. Now, just understand what the Export-Import Bank does and has been doing for 81 years is to help U.S. companies with U.S. employees sell their products overseas. It helps a small coffee company or a quiche company, but also large manufacturers of trains or bridges and infrastructure to be able to go to foreign businesses, foreign markets—in some cases, foreign governments—and say to them, America makes the best product in the world, we want to sell to you, and we are prepared to do business with you on terms that allow you initially maybe not to send us all the cash, but we've got—we're sending the goods to you, you get the cash back.

And as a consequence of this arrangement, not only do we not end up subsidizing these companies, these companies are paying a fee to the Export-Import Bank. The Export-Import Bank makes money for the U.S. Government. So I just want to be clear about this. This is not a situation in which taxpayers are subsidizing these companies. In fact, at the end of the day, we have a situation in which the U.S. Treasury is benefiting while at the same time allowing these companies to sell their products overseas.

And this historically has been a bipartisan program, under Democratic Presidents and Republican Presidents, with support from Democratic Members of Congress and Republican Members of Congress. Then, the fact that for the first time since its inception Congress failed to reauthorize this is a shame. And this is what Representative Heck was alluding to. Every other advanced country on Earth has a program like this in order to promote their businesses when they're selling overseas. And for us to be the only country that leaves these outstanding companies high and dry makes absolutely no sense.

You'll hear some critics suggest that, well, this is just corporate welfare for big multinationals. That is wrong. It is true that Boeing is able to sell planes and GE is able to sell big turbine engines in part because of this kind of financing arrangement, because oftentimes the customer is not prepared to just go ahead and

pay cash up front. But Ferra Coffee is a company with 12 employees. It needs this. Susan Axelrod's company makes quiche, but 30 percent of their revenue is from exports.

We've got companies here that range from 12 employees up to 500 employees. All of them are savvy businesspeople. If in fact they were able to make effective financial arrangements in the private marketplace, they would do so. But private financing in the traditional banks are not able to provide the same service or have the same expertise about dealing with some of these other markets that the Export-Import Bank does.

So this should be a no-brainer. Nobody has presented to me a plausible argument as to why we wouldn't do this. And by the way, this also affects every community in the country. There's a reason why we've got the mayors of Mobile, Alabama, and Mesa, Arizona, here. You've got small companies—or small companies and small towns in Texas that are being affected. You've got small companies in Portland, New Hampshire, Maine. From coast to coast, people are being affected by this, and we heard stories from these companies right now that orders are on hold, business is endangered, potentially, expansions will stall, fewer employees will be hired if we do not get this done.

So we need to get this done. And the good news is, is that you've got outstanding Members of Congress like Maxine Waters and Denny Heck and Gwen Moore and Senators like Sherrod Brown and Heidi Heitkamp and Maria Cantwell who have been working this issue very hard for a long time. These next couple of weeks, before Congress adjourns, is the time for us to go ahead and complete this. We cannot leave these businesses hanging; we cannot unilaterally disarm. Most importantly, we can't have American workers losing jobs because Congress doesn't act or because of some ideological arguments that don't make any sense and don't match up with the facts.

So I feel very strongly about this. I know it's not as interesting as some of the other issues and Donald Trump and all that—[*laughter*]—but I tell you what, this is actually something that matters to people on the ground. And I'm hoping that we really stay focused on this until Congress reauthorizes. All right?

So I want to thank the companies who are being here. We really appreciate you telling your stories. And I'm willing to bet that any of these companies or mayors who are here representing their communities will be happy to meet with some of the members of the media and tell their stories more directly so that you guys can highlight what's at stake here.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:31 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Susan Axelrod, owner, Love and Quiches Gourmet; Mayor William S. "Sandy" Stimpson of Mobile, AL; Mayor John C. Giles of Mesa, AZ; and Donald J. Trump, chairman and chief executive officer, Trump Organization, in his capacity as a 2016 Republican Presidential candidate.

Remarks at a Reception Celebrating Reauthorization of the African Growth and Opportunity Act
July 22, 2015

The President. Hey! Well, welcome to the White House, everybody.

Audience members. Thank you!

The President. You all look good.

Audience members. Thank you!

The President. We have some of America's biggest champions for a strong partnership of—with Africa here today: members of the diplomatic corps from our African partners; we've got some outstanding Members of Congress; leaders of business; NGOs; members of the faith community.

Ambassador Olhaye—I want to start by saying that tonight our thoughts are with our

friends from Djibouti as we mourn the passing of Ambassador Olhaye. He served here since 1988, the longest serving foreign Ambassador in the United States. He was the dean of the diplomatic corps here and at the United Nations. Michelle and I welcomed him to the White House numerous times. He represented his nation and all of Africa with pride. And the legacy of his service, particularly his personal role in helping pass AGOA, is going to endure in the strong partnership between our peoples.

I want to thank everybody who is here for everything that you do to strengthen ties between Africa and the United States. Tonight I especially want to thank you because, with your help, we succeeded in achieving the long-term renewal of the African Growth and Opportunity Act. [*Applause*] That is worth applauding.

So our celebration comes at a perfect moment, because tomorrow, I am going to Africa. I will be going to my father's home country of Kenya, and we will be going to Ethiopia as well. That's my first visit there, but this is my fourth visit the sub—to sub-Saharan Africa, more than any other U.S. President, which, I guess, if you're name is Barack Obama, I guess that make sense. [*Laughter*] I will also have the honor of being the first U.S. President to address the African Union.

My trip, although not long, because we still got a lot of other business to attend to back here, reflects a truth that has guided my approach to Africa. Despite its many challenges—and we have to be clear eyed about all the challenges that the continent still faces—Africa is a place of incredible dynamism, some of the fastest growing markets in the world, extraordinary people, extraordinary resilience. And it has the potential to be the next center of global economic growth.

And that's why, as President, I have worked so hard to take our relationship with Africa to a new level. We have boosted U.S. exports. We have launched historic initiatives to promote trade and investment, health, agricultural development and food security, Power Africa to promote and expand electrification. We're empowering a new generation of young African leaders, including our inspiring Mandela Fellows, who, when I get back, I will have a chance to meet with here at the White House for the second class of that outstanding group.

And part of what gives me the most pleasure is the fact that we're able to do this on a bipartisan basis and in partnership with African countries. By the way, to help move these efforts along, we do still need the Senate confirmation of Gayle Smith as our USAID Administrator. Not only is Gayle brilliant and passionate about the issues and with so many deep, longstanding relationships with people of the continent, but I can always spot her in a crowd because of the hair. [*Laughter*] All I had to do was just scan, and then, there it was. [*Laughter*]

Now that it's been renewed, AGOA will be central to our efforts to boost the trade and investment that supports hundreds of thousands of jobs both in Africa and the United States, creating opportunities for all of us. And I'm especially pleased that AGOA will continue to encourage good governance and labor and human rights. That's something that we can be proud of.

We're going to have to keep on encouraging more American trade and investment in Africa. There's still a lot of misperceptions within the business community. And that's why, last year, the United States hosted its first U.S-Africa Business Forum.

Tonight I can announce that we will host the next business forum next year, and I look forward to working with all of you to help unleash the growth and opportunity that we know Africa is capable of, progress that delivers more hope and more progress to Africans across the continent and more jobs and growth here in the United States.

The ties to Africa here in the United States obviously are deep; they are long; they are complicated. There have been times where there have been misunderstandings, and there have been times where there have been suspicions. But when you look at every survey, it turns out that the people of Africa love the United States and what it stands for, perhaps unmatched on any continent. And what's also interesting about the surveys is, is that when

they look to see who are the happiest and most optimistic of people, what's amazing is, is that Africans always rank high, despite poverty, despite conflict. There is a strength and a resilience there.

And the opportunities are extraordinary, and we just have to break down the stereotypes and the barriers. And thanks to the work of all of you; and I particularly want to thank the Members of Congress who are here who have fought so hard for this, and many of them will be going with me on this Africa trip. I really want to commend them, because they are going to help break down those misunderstandings and make things happen.

So thank you very much, everybody. Enjoy the reception. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:30 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Djibouti's Ambassador to the U.S. Roble Olhaye Oudine.

Remarks at the Reach Higher Initiative "Beating the Odds" Summit
July 23, 2015

The President. Hello! How's everybody doing? So, first of all, I want everybody to understand, I am not Wale. [*Laughter*] Although, I do have Wale's mike, and I've got to give it back to him after I say hi to you guys.

Has everybody had a good session here today?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Right? Now, I understand that you spent time with the true star of the Obama household—[*laughter*]—the First Lady of the United States. But I was not going to let her have all the fun because I wanted to just come by; I've got a lot of stuff going on—I'm working this, and I'm working that—but I did want to come by just to explain why I think this conference that got organized is so important.

America succeeds only when every young person in America is able to dream big and has the tools to chase their dreams. And if there is one thing that's always set America apart, it's been the idea that no matter what you look like, where you come from, how you started out, what your first name was, last name, what religion you were, what ethnicity, that if you worked hard, you could make it. And we have not always met that ideal, but that's always been the goal, that's what's unified us as a nation.

And the intention here at "Beating the Odds" Summit is just to remind all of us that even when times look tough and even though there are very real frustrations out there in terms of inequality and racism and there are barriers that are put in place that need to be torn down, but haven't gotten torn down yet and sexism and folks who are bullying our LGBT brothers and sisters. Even though those are real problems, this is still a nation of opportunity.

And when we see young people like you, we want to make sure that you are mindful of these problems, that hopefully, you will work together in a unified fashion to make even more progress, that you don't ignore these issues, but that you also have confidence that if you're willing to work hard and if you're willing to dig deep and if you're willing to make sacrifices, and if you're willing to embrace the values that are best in us, there's nothing that's going to stop you. And you've got to set your bar high.

So, if you're already doing well in school, you can do better. If you're already working in the community to make a difference, you can be an even greater leader. There's never been a time in human history where there's more possibility. And you're a generation that, because of that camera that you've got and the phone and—[*laughter*]—because of all that, you've got the world at your fingertips in a way that two generations ago, three generations ago, people could not even imagine. You've got more information in that little thing—[*laughter*]—than the—than what used to be the world's greatest libraries. You have access to more, and more people have access to you. But you've got to use it. And so, hopefully, the en-

tire concept here has been to show how people did beat the odds and to remind you that there's nothing holding you back except you. And you've got to be aggressive.

And look, if a kid born in Hawaii named Barack Obama—[*laughter*]—can end up being President of the United States and a young girl born on the South Side—[*laughter*]—of Chicago can end up being the First Lady, there's nothing you can't do. And hopefully, this summit has given you some sense of the possibilities, and also hopefully, it's given you some relationships and some networks that you can now tap because not only do I expect out of you individual success, but I also expect you to work together to bring about some collective success. Don't buy into the notion that your life's purpose is just about you, because there are a lot of folks who had even less advantages than you did, and you've got to be willing to reach back and bring them along.

All right? A'ight. Thank you, everybody. Let's—I've got to go give the mike back so the main attraction can come back out here. My rapping skills are terrible. [*Laughter*] I—that's one thing I can't do is rap. I like rap, but I cannot rap. [*Laughter*] Although, I've got—I have enough of a rap that I got Michelle to marry me, though. [*Laughter*] I'm just saying.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:57 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to musician Olubowale V. "Wale" Akintimehin.

The President's Weekly Address
July 25, 2015

Hi, everybody. It's been 7 years since the worst financial crisis in generations spread from Wall Street to Main Street, a crisis that cost millions of Americans their jobs, their homes, their life savings. It was a crisis that cost all of us. It was a reminder that we're in this together, all of us.

That's how we battled back these past 6½ years—together. We still have work to do, but together, we prevented a second Great Depression. Our businesses have created nearly 13 million jobs over the past 64 months. The housing market is healthier. The stock market has more than doubled, restoring the retirement savings of millions. Americans of all stripes buckled down, rolled up their sleeves, and worked to bring this country back. And to protect your efforts, we had to do something more; we had to make sure this kind of crisis never happens again.

That's why 5 years ago this week, we enacted the toughest Wall Street reform in history: new rules of the road to protect businesses, consumers, and our entire economy from the kind of irresponsibility that threatened all of us. Five years later, here's what that reform has done.

Wall Street reform turned the page on the era of "too big to fail." Now, in America, we welcome the pursuit of profits. But if your business fails, we shouldn't have to bail you out. And under the new rules, we won't. The day of taxpayer-funded bailouts are over.

Wall Street reform now allows us to crack down on some of the worst types of recklessness that brought our economy to its knees, from big banks making huge, risky bets using borrowed money, to paying executives in a way that rewarded irresponsible behavior.

Thanks to Wall Street reform, there's finally an independent Consumer Financial Protection Bureau with one mission: to protect American consumers. Already, they've gone after predatory or unscrupulous mortgage brokers, student lenders, credit card companies, and they've won, putting nearly $11 billion back into the pockets of more than 26 million consumers who've been cheated.

So this law is working. And we're working to protect even more families. Just this week, we announced that we're cracking down on the worst practices of payday lenders on military bases so that our troops and their families don't wind up trapped in a vicious cycle of debt. As long as I'm President, I'm going to keep doing

whatever I can to protect consumers, and our entire economy from the kind of irresponsibility that led to the great recession in the first place.

None of this has been easy. We've had to overcome fierce lobbying campaigns from the special interests and their allies in Congress. They're still trying to attack everything that these reforms accomplish. They're hiding rollbacks of key protections in unrelated bills. They're blocking the financial cops on the beat from doing their job. And they continue to claim this Wall Street reform is somehow bad for business. Of course, that doesn't explain 13 million new jobs and a stock market near record highs. This law is only bad for business if your business model depends on recklessness that threatens our economy or irresponsibility that threatens working families. We can't put the security of families at risk by returning to the days when big banks or bad actors were allowed to write their own rules. And if any bill comes to my desk that tries to unravel the new rules on Wall Street, I will veto it. We've worked too hard to recover from one crisis just to risk another one.

In America, we should reward drive and innovation and fair play. And that's what reform of Wall Street does. It makes sure everybody plays by the same set of rules. And if we keep moving forward, instead of backward—if we keep building an economy that rewards responsibility instead of recklessness—we won't just keep coming back, we'll come back stronger than ever.

Thanks, everybody, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:20 p.m. on July 23 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on July 25. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 24, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on July 25.

Remarks During a Panel Discussion at the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Nairobi, Kenya
July 25, 2015

President Obama. Thank you. Thank you so much. Please, please, everybody, have a seat. Good morning!

Audience members. Good morning!

President Obama. Thank—hey! *Jambo!*

Thank you so much, President Kenyatta, for your timely remarks, your warm welcome, and the great work that has gone into hosting this summit. It is wonderful to be back in Kenya. *Niaje! Wazi!*

Audience members. [*Inaudible*]

President Obama. *Hawayuni!*

I'm proud to be the first U.S. President to visit Kenya. And Obama, this is personal for me. There's a reason why my name is Barack Hussein Obama. My father came from these parts, and I have family and relatives here. And in my visits over the years, walking the streets of Nairobi, I've come to know the warmth and the spirit of the Kenyan people.

Now, what President Kenyatta and I really want to have is a conversation with our panel. And we've got some outstanding young people here today who I think represent the promise of entrepreneurship not only in Africa, but around the world. But I do want to make just a few quick points.

We are joined today by inspiring entrepreneurs from more than 120 countries, and many from across Africa. And all of you embody a spirit that we need to take on some of the biggest challenges that we face in the world: the spirit of entrepreneurship, the idea that there are no limits to the human imagination, that ingenuity can overcome what is and create what needs to be.

And everywhere I go, across the United States and around the world, I hear from people, but especially young people, who are ready to start something of their own, to lift up peo-

ple's lives and shape their own destinies. And that's entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship creates new jobs and new businesses, new ways to deliver basic services, new ways of seeing the world. It's the spark of prosperity. It helps citizens stand up for their rights and push back against corruption. Entrepreneurship offers a positive alternative to the ideologies of violence and division that can all too often fill the void when young people don't see a future for themselves.

Entrepreneurship means ownership and self-determination, as opposed to simply being dependent on somebody else for your livelihood and your future. Entrepreneurship brings down barriers between communities and cultures and builds bridges that help us take on common challenges together. Because one thing that entrepreneurs understand is, is that you don't have to look a certain way or be of a certain faith or have a certain last name in order to have a good idea.

Now, the challenge is—as so many of you know—it's very often hard to take those first steps. It's hard to access capital. It's hard sometimes to get the training and the skills to run a business as professionally as it needs to be in this competitive world. It's hard to tap into the networks and mentors that can mean the difference between a venture taking off and one that falls flat.

And it's even harder for women and young people in communities that have often been marginalized and denied access to opportunities. You run into old attitudes that say some people, because of where you come from or what you look like, don't have what it takes to lead or create a business. And sometimes, it's subtle. You go into pitch an idea, and maybe the response you get might not be as enthusiastic as if someone else pitched the exact same idea. Sometimes, women or folks from communities that historically have not been viewed as entrepreneurial may not have the means of opening those doors just to get in front of the right person.

Of course, the best answer to that kind of thinking is the example that all of you are setting: your success. And that's why I've made encouraging this spirit of entrepreneurship a key part of America's engagement in the world. I launched the first of these summits in Washington 5 years ago. And since then, we've helped empower hundreds of thousands of entrepreneurs, giving them a boost to launch thousands of new businesses and initiatives. Here in Africa, our Young African Leaders Initiative is empowering tens of thousands of dynamic leaders not only in business, but also in government and civil society. Because one of the things that we have come to understand—and this is particularly relevant to Africa—is that in order to create successful entrepreneurs, the Government also has a role in creating the transparency and the rule of law and the ease of doing business and the anticorruption agenda that creates a platform for people to succeed.

So this is our first Global Entrepreneurship Summit in sub-Saharan Africa. We wanted to come here. I wanted to be here because Africa is on the move. Africa is one of the fastest growing regions of the world. People are being lifted out of poverty. Incomes are up. The middle class is growing. And young people like you are harnessing technology to change the way Africa is doing business, as President Kenyatta alluded to. And that creates incredible opportunities for Africans and for the world. It means more growth and trade that creates jobs in all our countries. It's good for all of us. This continent needs to be a future hub of global growth, not just African growth.

And the country that's hosting us today is setting an important example. Kenya is leading the way. Today, Kenya is the largest economy in East Africa. High-speed broadband and mobile connectivity are on the rise, unleashing the entrepreneurial spirit of even more Kenyans. Every day around the world, millions of people send and save money with M-Pesa, and it's a great idea that started here in Kenya.

From Zimbabwe to Bangladesh, citizens work to keep elections safe, using the crowdsourcing platform Ushahidi, and that's a great idea that started right here in Kenya. Here in Nairobi, startup incubators are nurturing new businesses every day—maybe some of yours—each with

the potential to be the great next Kenyan innovation.

And the good news is that I'm not the only one who sees the promise of Africa. I'm joined on this trip by some leaders not just across my administration, but I'm also joined by 20 Members of the United States Congress from both parties, because supporting a strong partnership with Africa is something that unites Americans. We've got some incredible entrepreneurs and business leaders who are well established from the United States who are with us. They see the promise as well. And they're putting their money where their mouth is.

So today we're taking the next steps to partner with you. First, we're offering entrepreneurs more startup capital. At last year's Entrepreneurship Summit, we set a goal of generating $1 billion in new investment for emerging entrepreneurs around the world, with half the money going to support women and young people. A few months ago, I challenged governments, companies, organizations, and individuals to help us reach this target. Today I am proud to announce that not only did we make our goal, we surpassed it. We've secured more than $1 billion in new commitments from banks, foundations, philanthropists, all to support entrepreneurs like you.

Second, we're connecting you with the world's top business leaders and innovators. We hand-picked more than 200 seasoned investors and entrepreneurs and brought them to this summit. I've even brought a few of my Presidential ambassadors for entrepreneurship. These are some of America's leading innovators and entrepreneurs. So, if you see them, don't be shy. [*Laughter*] Pin them down. Get their advice. Pitch them your idea. That's why they're here. And don't be discouraged if they say, I'm not sure that's going to work, and they ask you tough questions. Because one of the things every one of these successful entrepreneurs will tell you is that along with incredible successes, they've had some failures as well, and they've learned from them, but they haven't given up.

Number three, as I've said, we're stepping it up to support women entrepreneurs. Women are powerhouse entrepreneurs. The research shows that when women entrepreneurs succeed, they drive economic growth and invest more back into their families and communities. The—we've already helped build a network of more than 1,600 women entrepreneurs across Africa. We're launching three women's entrepreneurial centers: one in Zambia, one opening later this year here in Nairobi, and I'm proud that—I'm proud to announce that the third center will be located in Mali. [*Applause*] We've got some folks from Mali in the house. [*Laughter*]

And as part of that $1 billion that I mentioned earlier, the United States Overseas Private Investment Corporation is contributing $100 million to support Goldman Sachs' 10,000 Women initiative, making more capital available to women-owned enterprises around the world. So congratulations.

So, as you leave here today, I want you all to know that I believe in you. I believe that you have the drive and the passion to change the world. You can unlock new solutions to the pressing global challenges that we face. I believe that. I believe that as you make these innovations, you'll make life better for all of us. And I'm looking forward to being your partner in that process.

So, with that, what I think we need to do is to hear from some of these young entrepreneurs themselves. They can tell us a little bit of what they're doing, because I think they're great examples of all the talent that is here today.

Thank you very much.

[*At this point, Hello Tractor Chief Executive Officer Jahiel Oliver, Teddy the Guardian Chief Executive Officer Josipa Majic, Akirachix Cofounder Judith Owegar, and President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya made brief remarks. Mr. Oliver, who moderated the discussion, then made additional remarks, and President Obama made concluding remarks as follows.*]

President Obama. Absolutely. That's well said. I think what's also interesting is, as you listen to these three—and I think that I'm sure this is true of many of the entrepreneurs here as well—one of the advantages of this techno-

logical revolution that we're going through is that it can be tailored and adapted to different countries, different environments, different circumstances, in some cases enabling countries to leapfrog over old technologies, to individualize what's done for a particular market or a particular need.

And the kind of thing that Jahiel is talking about—the share economy concept—we've got the founder of Airbnb out here, and you can talk to him a little bit. He's doing pretty good. [*Laughter*] But there's a recognition that through these technological platforms, what might have previously required huge investments of capital, and as a consequence, big barriers to entry, now you can get a startup moving, and if it's the right idea, it can travel with the speed of how fast you can text. I can't text very fast, but—[*laughter*]—I notice Malia and Sasha, they both—[*laughter*].

And so I think that this makes a place like Africa or a Croatia or other countries that historically may not have been viewed as right at the center of the global economy, suddenly, they can compete on a level playing field. And if you have a good idea in Zagreb or in Abuja or wherever, now you potentially have access to a global marketplace in ways that you haven't had before.

What President Kenyatta said is absolutely correct though, and that is, for us to take full advantage of this, we have to support programs like Judith's so that our young people are being trained in this technology, that there are no barriers for girls to be trained in this technology. If half of your team is not playing, you've got a problem. And in too many countries, half of the team—our women and girls—are not participating enough in this.

So we've got to invest in human capital so that they can—everyone has the opportunity to access this information, and there's got to be the framework for access to capital, reduce regulatory barriers, the ability to start up businesses effectively, making sure that governments are facilitating as opposed to being parasitic on entrepreneurial efforts—that's our job.

And I think that the good news is, is that we're seeing that recognition in more and more governments around the world. Not all of them always are practicing what they preach, but it's a start when governments feel obliged through, for example, initiatives like the Open Government Partnership that we started through the United Nations, where they feel obliged to acknowledge that they've got to get these rule of law issues and accountability issues and human investment issues right, then that gives us a lever to start continually improving the environment for all of you and your operations.

And last point I would make—and then—President Kenyatta alluded to this—I think it's very important for the business leaders who are here, the established business leaders, to understand that this is a—still a neglected market, and access of capital—accessing capital for entrepreneurs here is still too hard. And we can help—U.S. Government policy can help—but some of this is exposure and people having a vision of what's possible.

When I was here in Nairobi 10 years ago, it looked very different than it does today. And the incredible progress that's been made, imagine what could happen if more and more of our global business leaders and global capital paid a visit and actually had a conversation, as opposed to just being blinded by some of the stereotypes that are so often promoted. This thing could move even faster. And that's part of the reason why this summit is so important.

So I'm proud of all of you. I'm proud of these three entrepreneurs who are here. They represent all the talent that's in this room. Go out there and start something. We're excited about it. We expect great things out of you.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:40 a.m. at the United Nations Compound. In his remarks, he referred to Brian J. Chesky, cofounder and chief executive officer, Airbnb, Inc.

Remarks During a Tour of the Power Africa Innovation Fair in Nairobi
July 25, 2015

Now, one other thing I want to point out: So our Power Africa initiative has been leveraging private capital to invest in electrification all across the continent. And our preliminary goal was 10,000 megawatts; now we're looking at 30,000 megawatts, and we're well on our way.

Some of those megawatts are going to be generated by very traditional power plants and the traditional financing and large-scale capital. But part of what all these folks represent is the creativity of recognizing that there are going to be a lot of ways of generating power and a lot of different distribution mechanisms. And the models that we have in the United States may not always be perfectly adaptable to a rural region of a country, where you might wait 20 years before you get all the power lines in.

Moreover, part of what's taking place is, because—you notice these solar panels—this is an opportunity for countries like Africa to leapfrog over dirty energy and immediately go to clean energy. And so this mix of traditional products—or traditional products combined with these innovative ways of both producing energy and distributing it is why we think this is going to be such a promising initiative over the next several years.

There was an article, I think a while back, about, well, how much electricity has Power Africa actually produced lately? And I would just point out that if you wanted to start a power plant in the United States, it doesn't take a year to get that done. In fact, what's happening is, is that financing, the transactions have been completed, plans are underway, and the work that is being done now, we're going to start seeing thousands, then ten of thousands, then hundreds of thousands, and then ultimately millions of households all across this continent with electrical power that can boost productivity and economic growth all across the continent.

So it's really promising. We're really excited about it. All right.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:36 a.m. at the United Nations Compound.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya in Nairobi
July 25, 2015

President Kenyatta. Mr. President, once again, on a more formal basis, let me take this opportunity on behalf of my Government, the people of the Republic of Kenya, to really warmly welcome you to Kenya on this visit that is alongside the GES meeting which we both just opened this morning, and to say that we're all very excited and happy to have you here as the first U.S. President to visit Kenyan soil while in office; to say the people of Kenya are excited, to say that this is a very, very clear and strong indication of the solid relationship that has existed between our two countries, founded very strongly on deeply shared values, which we hope that this visit will further deepen as we continue with our deliberations.

The U.S. has been a very strong supporter of Kenya at the time of our independence. Our independence Constitution is framed around principles and lessons learned from the U.S. Thurgood Marshall and others were very key in supporting Kenya at that time. And really, as I will say—and I've stated before—you've also been a strong supporter of our move not only to secure and to prosper our country, but also to deepen democracy, good governance, and trade between our two nations.

So I strongly believe that this is a great time and a great opportunity for us to move along those lines. Kenya, Africa as a whole, is at a great and opportune time. Things are changing. This is a great opportunity for Africa to re-

ally leapfrog and really take root as a middle-income country, as you said earlier. Our middle class is growing. Our economy is stabilizing. Our devolution has managed to reach us to have a much more equitable basis for our growth and development, which is one of the major challenges that we've had in the past.

But at the same time, we recognize the various challenges that confront us, which I believe that, working together, we will be able to overcome and resolve. Key amongst those are the security issues related around the terror threat that faces Kenya—but not just faces Kenya, and the globe—and our strong belief that we will be able to deal with this. No single country can deal with this problem alone. We need to partner with the realization that it is a global threat that knows no boundaries. And ultimately, it is the close partnership that we put together against all people of good will across all nations that will help us overcome this challenge. We are grateful for the support that we have continued to receive from your government in this fight, and we look forward to further—even further cooperation.

Cooperation in the fields of governance, again, this is a key area where we strongly believe that we can learn from your own examples and lessons to help us strengthen our own governance structures and institutions. Other areas also include trade. We, as Kenya, and indeed, as Africa, are grateful for the extension of AGOA. We believe that this is something that can go a long way towards further deepening our trade relations. We're very happy to see an increased interest also in investment—or American investment in Kenya. In the ICT sector, we're working very closely in the health sector, the urban transportation sector—these are some of the areas where we see a deepened partnership.

So I think with those brief introductory remarks, I'd like maybe just to introduce you to those who are on the table, starting with Ann Waiguru at the end there, who is our Cabinet Secretary for Devolution. And we have Judy Wakhungu, who is our Cabinet Secretary for Environment. We have General Nkaissery, Retired, who is our Cabinet Secretary for Interior. We have Amina Mohamed, our Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs. My able Deputy, Mr. William Ruto; our Cabinet Secretary Henry Rotich for Finance at the Treasury; our Cabinet Secretary for Health, also currently standing in for Infrastructure; our Cabinet Secretary for Defense, Raychelle Omamo; our Cabinet Secretary for Commerce and Industrialization Adan Mohammed.

And to really, once again, say it's a great pleasure to have you here, Mr. President, and we hope you will enjoy your stay. And we look forward to fruitful deliberations and discussions with yourself and your team.

Welcome, Mr. President.

President Obama. Well, Mr. President, thank you so much for the warm welcome. Thanks to your delegation and all those who put in so much time and effort in arranging our visit. I know it's busy when I come to town—[*laughter*]—and I very much appreciate all the efforts that have been made. People could not have been more warm and more gracious. And most importantly, I think it promises to be a very productive meeting, because, obviously, the people of both Kenya and the United States, they want to see not only good feelings, but good outcomes. And I think we've done the preparations to make that happen.

I'll be very brief; I know we're going to have a press conference later. I'll just say this. Kenya is on the move. One of the purposes of my trip is to once again remind my fellow countrymen that we take an interest in Africa because what happens in Africa is going to impact the world.

Some of the fastest growing economies are in Africa. Some of our closest partners are in Africa. The challenges of terrorism are ones that have to be addressed, but the opportunities for growth and prosperity and people-to-people exchanges and tourism and scientific and educational exchanges, those are the things that the people of Africa are most hungry for, and no place better exemplifies the possibilities and opportunities than Kenya, which has grown at an extraordinary pace over the last decade and has been able to make a transition away from ethnicity and division

towards an increasing sense of national unity, which I think has contributed to this growth.

And we want to be partners in this process, not out of charity, but because we see opportunity. We think that enhanced trade, enhanced investment, enhanced cooperation in our security services—all those things will benefit Americans and help create American jobs, and help create growth and opportunity back home. And the Global Entrepreneurial Summit that you have been hosting shows how hungry this next generation is for a new model of relations that is focused on the future and not just the past.

I am very excited about what we can accomplish together. And I think that this visit and these meetings will allow us to take the already strong relationship that we have between our two countries and really put in place concrete plans and timetables to get things done. And it's just an added benefit for me that it happens to be also a place that I love, and it gives me a chance to see old friends and make some new ones.

So thank you so much for your hospitality. And we'll see you guys at the press conference. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: President Obama spoke at approximately 2:55 p.m. at the State House. In his remarks, President Kenyatta referred to Cabinet Secretary for Health James Wainaina Macharia of Kenya.

The President's News Conference With President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya in Nairobi
July 25, 2015

President Kenyatta. Please be seated. Thank you. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Let me begin by saying that we have had an excellent afternoon where we've had very frank and, indeed, very fruitful discussions with President Obama on a variety of issues of mutual interest both to Kenya and the United States. This follows the signing of agreements covering areas of mutual interest such as security, visa reciprocity, and the development cooperation, amongst other things.

Our discussions affirmed that Kenya and the United States share deep values in many areas of critical interest. And naturally, therefore, our peoples and governments speak the same language on many issues. Kenya is an open, democratic society, underpinned by an embrace of democracy. We are deepening that democracy while fighting global terrorists who seek to destroy our way of life. Left undefeated, they will redraw the international system and make room for violent extremism and tyranny.

We agreed together that we can build a future in which our people of all faiths, cultures live peacefully together, with the rights of individuals and minorities protected and those in power hold to account—held to account by strong and inclusive institutions. I also expressed to President Obama that without building shared prosperity, our vision of a secure Africa and, indeed, a stable world will remain a fragile dream.

It is for this reason that Kenya, an increasingly dynamic country, is continuously opening new trade and investment frontiers across the world. I conveyed the hope that during his tenure in office, the United States would look to develop a strong strategic partnership with Africa built on shared values and interests. I also expressed the hope that his visit would allow him and the people of the United States to gain an even deeper insight on Africa's challenges. And this will enable them to see these challenges as an expression of great opportunities that are available here.

The United States is a country of entrepreneurs with the unique capacity to build transformative businesses, and I hope that these entrepreneurs and investors will recognize and act on the immense opportunities Kenya and Africa present. And in this regard, I also ex-

pressed my appreciation of his leadership in shepherding the renewal of AGOA.

Beyond shared values, we are brothers and sisters, fellow travelers in the struggle for a better world for all. And we therefore need to upscale our partnerships in agriculture, infrastructure, and affordable energy. I also expressed my own commitment to ensuring that on our part, we will continue to take the steps that provide the proper conditions for a vibrant ecosystem for investors and entrepreneurs.

We agreed to continue to engage one another so that we can strengthen what is already a robust relationship. And indeed, I look forward to hosting President Obama later this evening and, indeed, also seeing him at the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in September.

President Obama, once again, on my own behalf, on behalf of my Government and the people of Kenya, let me thank you for your support as evidenced by the various agreements signed between our two governments and, indeed, your willingness to engage Kenya in the true spirit of partnership.

It's now my pleasure to introduce the President to make some brief remarks as well. Thank you.

President Obama. Habari. President Kenyatta, let me just reiterate what I said at the summit earlier: To you and the people of Kenya, thank you for the extraordinary welcome that you've given me and for the same kindness that you've shown to me since my first visit to Kenya nearly 30 years ago. I'm proud to return as the first U.S. President to ever visit Kenya while still in office. I need to give a special acknowledgement to everybody in Alego and Kogello and Kisumu. [*Laughter*]

I'm well aware, however, that the enthusiasm that we're seeing today from my visit is a reflection of something bigger, and that's the desire among the Kenyan people for a deeper partnership with America. And that's why I'm here. My work with President Kenyatta today has been rooted in our shared recognition that the interests of both our nations and the lives of both our peoples can be advanced if our countries deepen and expand our cooperation. And that's what we've agreed to today.

First, I want to salute the Kenyan people for their hard-won progress in strengthening their democracy. Millions voted for the new Constitution, one of the most progressive in Africa, with its strong protections for freedom of expression, assembly, and the press, and its emphasis on equality and against discrimination. The election 2 years ago was competitive and largely peaceful. Kenya has a determined, active, feisty press, as we see here today. And as I've said elsewhere, a free press helps make a nation stronger and more successful, and it makes us leaders more effective because it demands greater accountability. Kenya has a vibrant civil society, which is essential for any democracy, and I look forward to meeting tomorrow with representatives from civil society who stand up for the dignity and rights of all Kenyans.

Dignity begins, of course, with the ability to provide a decent life for our families. And today President Kenyatta and I agreed to expand the economic partnerships between our peoples that can provide broad-based prosperity. We will extend student and business visas for up to 5 years for Kenyans traveling to the United States and for Americans traveling to Kenya. This will make it easier for university students to complete their studies and for businesses to make long-term plans. Our governments are also working to launch direct flights between Kenya and the United States as soon as possible. As part of our Young Leaders—Young African Leaders Initiative, we'll also continue to support promising Kenyan youth as they work to become future leaders in business, civil society, and government.

Now that we've renewed the African Growth and Opportunity Act, or AGOA, for another 10 years, I discussed with President Kenyatta how we can expand our economic cooperation. And we're especially focused on infrastructure and energy, two keys to economic growth. Our Power Africa initiative is supporting Kenya's goal of achieving its national energy needs—electricity for Kenyans—by 2030. And this includes innovations that bring power

to rural Kenyans who are off the grid, as I saw earlier today at the Global Entrepreneurship Summit. I also want to commend Kenya, a leader in clean energy, for announcing its post-2020 target to limit carbon emissions as part of our fight against climate change.

Together, we are confronting insidious threats to Kenya's prosperity. President Kenyatta, I want to commend you on your announced commitment to rooting out corruption. With the joint commitment we've agreed to today, the United States will offer advice and technical assistance to support Kenya as it takes additional steps toincrease transparency and accountability and to strengthen institutions that fight corruption. So we're making important commitments, and now we need to work together to fulfill them. Because if Kenya can put in place the habits and institutions of good governance, it can help unleash even greater growth and investment and prosperity for the Kenyan people. And that will be good for everybody.

Our countries are also close partners in the fight against poachers and traffickers that threaten Kenya's world-famous wildlife. The United States has a ban already on the commercial import of elephant ivory. I can announce that we're proposing a new rule that bans the sale of virtually all ivory across our State lines, which will eliminate the market for illegal ivory in the United States.

On security, the United States and Kenya are already strong partners, and today we reaffirm that we stand united in the face of terrorism. Earlier, I had the opportunity to meet with survivors and families of victims of the bombing of our U.S. Embassy in 1998. In the face of despicable violence, such as the attack on Garissa University College and the Westgate Mall, the Kenyan people have shown incredible resolve and remarkable resilience. I also want to pay tribute to the sacrifices of Kenyan forces who serve in the African Union–led mission against al-Shabaab in Somalia, and to thank Kenya for hosting so many Somali refugees, who are also victims of al-Shabaab.

Today we discussed deepening our security cooperation. As part of our Security Governance Initiative, our governments signed an action plan yesterday in which we'll support Kenya's effort to strengthen its judiciary, police, and border security. We also discussed broader efforts to counter violent extremism, here in Kenya and around the world, efforts that are advanced when there is rule of law, respect for human rights, a space for civil society and peaceful dissent, and when we welcome all communities as our partners. All our nations are going to have to work together in order for us to be successful.

We also had the opportunity to discuss regional security issues, and we focused in particular on the terrible conflict in South Sudan, which has taken so many lives, that cause unbearable suffering for the South Sudanese people. The situation is dire. And we agree that the best way to stop the fighting is for South Sudanese leaders to put their country first with a peace agreement that ends the fighting.

We also discussed Burundi, where the recent elections were not credible. And we're calling on the Government and the opposition to come together in a dialogue that leads to a political solution to the crisis and avoids the loss of more innocent life.

And finally, we're going to keep investing in the health and well-being of our people. Our Feed the Future initiative is focused on reducing hunger, malnutrition, and poverty. We're working together to ensure that girls have access to education and that women are protected from violence. Today I can announce that Kenya will be part of our DREAMS initiative to help keep adolescent girls safe and AIDS-free. And across Africa, Kenya and the United States will keep working to strengthen public health systems and deal with outbreaks and diseases before they become epidemics. Together, we can save lives.

So, President Kenyatta, thank you for the progress and new commitments that we've made today. I know that Kenya faces persistent challenges, as does the United States. But I will tell you that every time I come here, I'm struck by the dynamism and the hopefulness,

the determination and the talent of the Kenyan people. And I look forward to the opportunity to speak to the people of Kenya tomorrow about the future that we can build together.

So *asante sana*.

You want me to start? Okay.

Mr. Jeff Mason [Reuters].

Kenya-U.S. Counterterrorism Cooperation/Al-Shabaab Terrorist Organization/Somalia/Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights

Q. Thank you very much. Mr. President, I'd like to ask about two topics. First of all, what more specifically can the U.S. do to help Kenya in the fight against al-Shabaab? Do you still see Somalia as a counterterrorism model? And are you concerned about Kenyan authorities using counterterrorism as an excuse to commit human rights violations?

Secondly, can you comment on the state of gay and lesbian—the treatment of gay and lesbians in Kenya, which rights groups have called dismal and President Kenyatta has called a nonissue?

For you, sir, President Kenyatta, on the same themes, what more do you need from the United States to help fight al-Shabaab, and are you getting it? And can you please also respond to criticism about the state of gay rights in your country?

President Obama. Well, this was an extensive topic of conversation and concrete action that we're now taking. There has been extensive and effective counterterrorism cooperation between the United States and Kenya dealing with primarily threats from al-Shabaab.

In part because of the actions that we've taken not just with Kenya, but with AFRICOM, and the efforts, collectively, of countries to work together—Uganda, Ethiopia, others—we have systematically reduced the territory that al-Shabaab controls. We have been able to decrease their effective control within Somalia and have weakened those networks operating here in East Africa.

That doesn't mean the problem is solved. As is true around the world, what we find is, is that we can degrade significantly the capacities of these terrorist organizations, but they can still do damage. The number of individuals involved in Garissa or Westgate Mall were not large, but when they're willing to target soft targets and civilians, and are prepared to die, they can still do a lot of damage.

And so what we discussed was the importance of, number one, continuing the effort to root out al-Shabaab's capacity inside of Somalia, working jointly. And as we speak, Kenya is working with Ethiopia and with the United States and others to further degrade al-Shabaab's space of operations inside of Somalia. So we have to keep that pressure going, even as we're strengthening the Somalian Government. Because part of the reason that al-Shabaab was able to emerge as a significant threat to the region was a nonfunctioning Government, effectively a failed state in Somalia for so long.

There is now a Government and a Cabinet that is credible and is working with the international community in Mogadishu. And even as we put military pressure on al-Shabaab, we also have to make sure that we're standing up an effective governance structure inside of Somalia. And we've made progress there.

In addition, we have to continue to make progress in intelligence-sharing and being able to identify and prevent threats before they occur here in Kenya and elsewhere in the region. And part of our announcement today involves additional funding, additional assistance that we're providing the Kenyan security forces to deal with these very specific counterterrorism threats, as well as additional training and assistance to make sure that the approach that's taken in rooting out potential terrorist threats don't create more problems than they're solving.

And this goes to the other element of the question that you asked. What we have found, sometimes through hard experience—and I shared this with President Kenyatta—is that if you paint any particular community with too broad a brush, if in reaction to terrorism you are restricting legitimate organizations, reducing the scope of peaceful organization, then that can have the inadvertent effect of actually increasing the pool of recruits for terrorism

and resentment in communities that feel marginalized.

And I shared with him that one of the strengths in the United States, part of the reason why, although we're seeing potential lone wolf attacks inside the United States, that we have not seen this sort of systematic networks and cells developing in many of our Muslim communities or immigrant communities inside of the United States is, is that we've been very conscious to make sure that law enforcement is reaching out and cooperating and working with them, because they are our partners in this process. And the only way we're going to fight the poison that's being fed to them—to their young people through social media—is to make sure that they're our eyes and our ears and they're counseling us on how we can more effectively build trust and increase cooperation. And that's proven successful.

The same will be true here in Kenya. And I was very clear to President Kenyatta: Ultimately, the Kenyan Government is accountable to the Kenyan people, and it will find its way through this process in cooperation with us, but our experience and best practices tell us that rule of law, respecting civil society—in fact, embracing civil society, particularly in those communities that may be targeted for recruitment by organizations like al-Shabaab—that becomes more important the more significant the threat is. And not only is that practical advice, but it's the right thing to do, and it's consistent with the Kenyan Constitution and with the values that you heard President Kenyatta espouse.

Similarly, with respect to the rights of gays and lesbians, I've been consistent all across Africa on this. I believe in the principle of treating people equally under the law and that they are deserving of equal protection under the law and that the state should not discriminate against people based on their sexual orientation. And I say that, recognizing that there may be people who have different religious or cultural beliefs. But the issue is, how does the state operate relative to people?

If you look at the history of countries around the world, when you start treating people differently—not because of any harm they're doing anybody, but because they are different—that's the path whereby freedoms begin to erode and bad things happen. And when a government gets in the habit of treating people differently, those habits can spread.

And as an African American in the United States, I am painfully aware of the history of what happens when people are treated differently, under the law, and there's—were all sorts of rationalizations that were provided by the power structure for decades in the United States for segregation and Jim Crow and slavery, and they were wrong.

So I'm unequivocal on this. If somebody is a law-abiding citizen who is going about their business and working in a job and obeying the traffic signs—[*laughter*]—and doing all the other things that good citizens are supposed to do and not harming anybody, the idea that they are going to be treated differently or abused because of who they love is wrong. Full stop.

And the state does not need to weigh in on religious doctrine. The state just has to say, we're going to treat everybody equally under the law. And then, everybody else can have their own opinions. All right?

Q. President Kenyatta, could you address the questions as well, please?

President Kenyatta. Yes, we'll address them. [*Laughter*] First and foremost, I couldn't agree more on what President Obama has just said, especially with regard to the issue of the fight against terrorism. The support and the partnership that we have with the United States from an intelligence point of view, from a counterterrorism point of view, but more importantly, as he's also just mentioned, working with societies on how to prevent especially extremists from finding a better fodder for them to be able to develop and to grow and to nurture the terrorists of tomorrow. You've also heard him say—and indeed, we're truly grateful—his expansion under the agreements that we've signed of the cooperation and the assistance that we're getting from the United States.

So, as a country, as a government, we are satisfied with what we're doing. We need to ex-

pand that more. Because the battle that we're fighting is not a Kenyan war. Kenya just happens to be the frontier of it, being a neighbor to a country that for a long time has not had any kind of formal government. We need to work much closer together to see how we can stabilize Somalia. We need to work much closer together to see how we can help the Somali Government which is in place, work together with its regional governments in order to continuously decrease the area and the space that al-Shabaab and the like have to operate and to train and to expert terror not just to Kenya, but also to other parts of the world.

So I'm looking forward to deepening the partnership that we already have. But we are satisfied with the kind of cooperation that we've had and the close working relationship between our various institutions.

You raised the issue of human rights, and I mentioned earlier that the kind of fight we're having right now, this is an existential fight for us; this is something that we have not been familiar with. Kenya has always been a country that has respected different religions. This issue of terrorism is new to us. And as it is new, we learn with each and every step. We are improving our capacities and our methods of dealing with terrorism. We, as a country, are willing to learn. We have undertaken fundamental reforms in our police services to help us to deal with this particular problem. We are continuing to partner with friends, like the United States, who are giving their own experiences as to how they have handled this particular problem, and we are keen to learn and to participate.

And I am certain that as we move forward, as we get better, as we learn from others, we will be able to handle the situation in a manner that does not, as President Obama said, encourage this kind of activity going forward on the basis of either marginalization or people feeling that particular communities are being targeted.

As a country, we have done a lot, especially under our new Constitution, our new devolved system of government that is aimed at providing and ensuring equity and development across the country. We have put a lot of resources into some of the previously neglected areas. In fact, today, as we sit, a huge portion—approximately 40 percent—of our national budget is being invested in those areas in an attempt to ensure that all communities in our country feel that the Government is for them all and that they are part and parcel of the social-economic development of our country.

So we will continue to improve. We will continue to learn. We will continue to participate with all communities, with civil society, to strengthen our partnership in order to ultimately be able to defeat this enemy.

With regard the second question, just like President Obama, I think we also need to be able to speak frankly about some of these things. And the fact of the matter is that Kenya and the United States, we share so many values: our common love for democracy, entrepreneurship, value for families. These are things that we share. But there are some things that we must admit we don't share, our culture, our societies don't accept. It is very difficult for us to be able to impose on people that which they themselves do not accept.

This is why I repeatedly say that, for Kenyans today, the issue of gay rights is really a nonissue. We want to focus on other areas that are day-to-day living for our people: The health issues that we have discussed with President Obama. These are critical. Issues of ensuring inclusivity and—of women, a huge section of society that is normally left out of the mainstream of economic development. What we can do in terms of infrastructure, what we can do in terms of education, in terms of our roads, in terms of giving our people power, encouraging entrepreneurship. These are the key focuses.

Maybe once, like you have overcome some of these challenges, we can begin to look at new ones. But as of now, the fact remains that this issue is not really an issue that is on the foremost mind of Kenyans, and that is the fact. Yes.

Kenya-U.S. Relations/Political Corruption

Q. Thank you very much. My name is Ken Mijungu. And I have two questions for President

Obama and a question for President Uhuru Kenyatta. My first question to President Obama is, there has been a perception that Kenya and the U.S. had a strained relationship right from the time that we had a new Government. And in fact, we had several Western countries saying that, indeed, choices had consequences. Is your coming to Kenya sort of pressing a reset button to tell us that, indeed, you are ready to renew your relationship with this country that you've had a long-running relationship with for quite some years?

And my second question is about the funding. Indeed, you have told us about several agreements that have been signed. Does it concern your Government that, indeed, there is corruption that has—it's a word that has been taken head on by our very President? And in fact, some of his Cabinet Secretaries and peers and top Government officials are currently in court because of that. Does it concern your Government that, indeed, you're spending money in a country that the President himself is concerned about the level of corruption?

And to President Uhuru Kenyatta: There has also been a perception about Kenya looking increasingly east, especially after the general election in 2013, other things that were said. So is this also a sort of an announcement that, indeed, our traditional partners—i.e., the U.S.—reaffirm the commitment to renewing our agreements that we had in place and, indeed, we are going forward and working together? Thank you.

President Obama. Well, first of all, we don't need a reset——

President Kenyatta. Absolutely.

President Obama. ——because the U.S.-Kenya relationship and cooperation continued robustly throughout my Presidency. The fact that I didn't get here may have gotten people riled up. But frankly, given my familiarity and knowledge with Kenya, the fact that there were many countries across this vast continent that I had never visited, it was always my intention to get to Kenya, but I wanted to make sure that people didn't think I was playing favorites so quick—[*laughter*]—immediately after I was elected.

Now, to be honest—and I think President Kenyatta would acknowledge this as well—there were deep concerns and tensions arising out of the violence that took place in an earlier election. We haven't made any secret about that. Accounting is being done of what happened there. And we continue to believe that norms have to be observed and all countries, big and small—not just African countries, but all countries—should be held to high standards in terms of making sure that elections, democratic processes, don't lead to violence.

The subsequent election that showed growth in the election process, the new Constitution that reflects one of the most progressive articulations of the principles of freedom and human dignity on the continent, that signals, I think, a very positive direction in where Kenya is moving.

President Kenyatta, during our meeting, acknowledged that there's still more work to be done. And our goal in dealing with all our partners is to be respectful, to recognize that ultimately sovereign countries have to make their own determinations about their destiny, but to be very clear about the values we care about. And we can engage and cooperate and work together and occasionally disagree. And that's not a rupture to the relationship; that's just the nature of friends. There are going to be times where we have disagreements. You just heard one before this. [*Laughter*] And that is part of the dialogue and the process that takes place between friends.

With respect to corruption, I think it is absolutely the right thing to do for President Kenyatta emphasize this. And as I stated to him during our meeting, this may be the biggest impediment to Kenya growing even faster and more people having even more opportunity, the fact that doing business and ordinary people just moving along in their lives here is constantly sapped by corruption at a high level and at a low level. International businesses are concerned if the price of investing in Kenya is 5 percent or 10 percent going to someplace that doesn't have to do with the project. It's just a

math issue. If they've got a plan for a business, it's got a certain profit, and if suddenly some of that is taken off the top due to corruption, that makes that investment less attractive. And that's the judgments that they make.

And then, at a more grassroots level, if you've got some small-businessperson trying to open up a store and they find that they have to pay bribes here, there, everywhere, just to get a business started, that's inhibiting the kind of entrepreneurship that we highlighted earlier this morning.

And I think President Kenyatta is serious about going after this. As I indicated to him, if you look at the history of this—because the United States had, in the past, all kinds of corruption, dating back to the founding of the country. My hometown of Chicago was famous for Al Capone and bootleggers and bribery and police on the take. But what we were able to show is, is that over time, when people of integrity at the highest levels say, "This is a priority, we're going to stop this," and are willing to hold people at the highest levels accountable and not just the small-time corruption, that begins to change the culture. And it is important, I think, for the people of Kenya to say this is not the normal way of doing business and to say no to it at every level.

And that will require some change in habits. I mentioned sometimes civil servants, they don't feel like their salaries are high enough, and they think that, ah, it's just the way of doing business; I supplement my salary by imposing my own personal little tax to boost my salary. And then, that suddenly becomes commonplace in a department or a bureaucracy. And you have to reverse that. And that may mean making sure that police officers or civil servants are paid properly and that they have sufficient benefits so that they don't feel obliged to do that. But some of it is also just breaking these habits and saying no.

And that comes from the top. And so I very much applaud President Kenyatta for initiating this campaign. It's going to require the support of the Kenyan people, and it's going to require some visible prosecutions. Because I mentioned to him, people aren't stupid. If they say—if they see an elected official and they know that their salary is there, and suddenly, they're driving through town in a very big car, and they see their cousin driving through the town with a very big car, and they're suddenly building a new house, and all that doesn't seem to match up with their salary, they don't have to be a forensic accountant to know what's going on. [*Laughter*]

And so when it—when that happens, people have to be held into account. And the ideal that the President is putting forward is the right one. And now it's up to execution. And that won't be just the President's job alone, it will be the job of leadership both locally as well as nationally.

President Kenyatta. I think mine was with regard to looking east. And the first thing I want to say is that I couldn't agree more. We're not talking about a renewal, we're talking about a deepening. The United States, from the time of our independence, has been a very strong partner and ally. Kenya has benefited from AGOA, benefited heavily in our health sector, in education all these years. And that has never stopped. It's been continuous and ongoing.

But the key point is what I said when we were opening the summit this morning, and the fact is that Kenya as a country is not looking east or west. What we're looking to do is to make progress, is to develop our country, is to bring prosperity, is to build infrastructure. And we are looking to partner with our friends, old and new, to help us achieve the Kenyan dream, to help us achieve our social-economic agenda. And the U.S. happens to be a very strong partner of Kenya in that objective, as are many other countries in the world.

So I see no conflict, no contradiction. Actually, I just see deepening of partnerships that already existed, all with the objective of improving business for Kenyans, for the U.S., improving the social life of Kenyans, and deepening our people-to-people partnership as well through trade and investment.

So there is no contradiction whatsoever. We are just strengthening already good relations that exist between our two countries.

President Obama. Juliet Eilperin [Washington Post].

Africa-U.S. Relations/President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)/President Obama's African Aid Policies/African Energy Infrastructure/President Obama's Kenyan Relatives

Q. Thanks. President Obama, while you've launched multiple policy initiatives on Africa, it is unclear whether any of them will outlast your Presidency. What do you think needs to happen to ensure you have an Africa policy legacy as enduring as those of Presidents Bush and Clinton? And to what extent do you think you've met the expectations people here had of you as a son of Africa?

And speaking of your African roots, what did you talk about at dinner last night with roughly three dozen of your relatives? [*Laughter*] And had you met all of them before?

And then I have a question for President Kenyatta as well. President Kenyatta, could you spell out in concrete terms what's different in Kenya today because of President Obama's election, how his connection to Kenya has shaped your discussions today, and what aspects of his Africa policy do you think will endure after he's left office? Thank you.

President Obama. Let me, first of all, underscore that I am really proud of the work that previous administrations did here in Africa, and I've done everything I could to build on those successes. I mean, this isn't a beauty contest between Presidents; this is the U.S. Government and whatever the policies that need to be put in place in order for us to help our partner countries.

I've said before—and I'll repeat—I think President George W. Bush's PEPFAR initiative was as significant an achievement internationally as anything that we've done over the last several decades. It's saved millions of lives, which is why I've increased funding substantially for PEPFAR during the course of my Presidency and continue to build on what was initially a matter of just getting antivirals and treatment for HIV, and are now building greater capacity within those countries that have received PEPFAR funding so that they can do even more themselves in terms of their health care infrastructure.

So the bottom line is, I want to build on what's already been done, and then we want to fill gaps that still need to be filled. Along those lines, if you look at our Feed the Future program, for example, we've got millions of farmers across this continent who, as we speak, have benefited from increased yields, increased incomes, greater access to small loans that are making them more productive, greater access to market, linking up with technology in ways that assure that they get a fair price, all of which, since Africa is still disproportionately rural, is increasing incomes and spurring growth and building a middle class in the entire continent. And we can document the extraordinary progress that's been made there, and it is a model that's working and then has been supplemented with private sector investment that is further advancing the development of a more productive agricultural sector across the African Continent.

With respect to Power Africa, which was just launched a couple years ago, we set initially a goal of 10,000 megawatts of electricity being generated in sub-Saharan Africa. We were sufficiently successful in lining up interest and investments that we've now tripled that and set a goal of 30,000. And we're on our way to achieving that goal. We are well on track.

I noted that there was an article in a U.S. publication suggesting, well, there's no electricity being generated from this yet. The next time somebody is interested in how electricity gets generated, go back home and find out how long it takes to build a power plant. I mean, sometimes, these are long-term projects, but we have billions of dollars of transactions already locked in and billions more in the pipeline. And that is just on the traditional power grid side. That doesn't include all the innovative, off-grid electrical—or power generation that we witnessed just in those booths that we were passing at the Entrepreneurial Summit, using solar and other—bio-tech and other innovative ways to generate power in rural communities that are not going to be connected to the grid anytime soon.

So that's just two examples of initiatives that I'm confident will have a lasting effect, not because they were initiated by me, but because they fill an extraordinary need. If we can get sub-Saharan Africa to be electrified at the same levels as Asia is, that alone is going to drive economic growth exponentially. I mean, the productivity that is delivered as a consequence of just access to power: kids suddenly being able to read and do their homework at night; women relieved of some of the burdens of collecting firewood and how they are able to use basic appliances that we take for granted; farmers being able to improve their yields—it's a game-changer.

But we're not going to know exactly what that looks like 10 years from now. And I suspect that the next President, building off of what we've already set up, will learn what's working really well and what's not working so well and make some tweaks. And I don't have pride of authorship. I hope that they figure out even better ways for us to continue the things that we've started, just as we, I think, have refined and improved the excellent work that was done by Presidents Clinton and Presidents Bush.

In terms of what I was talking about with my family—I—mostly we were just catching up. There's more immediate family that I had known well from previous visits. There was some more extended family that I had not met before. My sister Auma, who I'm very close to and stay in close contact with, I think helped to make sure that everybody was represented. I think the people of Kenya will be familiar with the need to manage family politics sometimes. [*Laughter*] In these extended families, there are cousins and uncles and aunties that show up that you didn't know existed, but you're always happy to meet. And there were lengthy explanations, in some cases, of the connections. [*Laughter*] But it was a wonderful time.

And part of the challenge that I've had during the course of my Presidency is that, given the demands of the job and the bubble, it's very—I can't come here and just go up country and visit for a week and meet everybody. And I—that's partly, actually, what I had to explain, was—begging for forgiveness—that once I'm a private citizen, I will have more freedom to reconnect and to be involved and engaged in some of the work that needs to be done, because some of these communities are very poor.

I'm more restricted, ironically, as President of the United States than I am as—than I will be as a private citizen in terms of some of the hands-on and direct help that I'd like to give, partly just because of schedule, but partly also because of making sure that in my relationship to Kenya, I am understood to be operating as the President of the United States, and that my interaction is with the Government of the—and the non-for-profits and the organizations that represent all the people of any particular country.

President Kenyatta. There's one area—and it's not specifically African, because I think all the initiatives he's mentioned we're all happy and proud of—but the one initiative that I would really want to focus on is the fact that I think President Obama will strongly be remembered in Africa for his focus on the youth of this continent; the focus on the young people of this continent, to be able to extract their talents, their abilities. And he's been very focused on this both with the Young Leaders Initiative, with the GES that we've just been attending, really helping us unblock the full potential of Africa's youth and young men and women.

So this, I think, will be the key legacy that President Obama will be remembered for on this continent for a long time to come.

That said, Judy—or Jacque, rather.

U.S.-Kenya Travel Restrictions/President Obama's Relationship With Kenya

Q. Jacque Maribe, Citizen Television. President Obama, and President Kenyatta, you spoke about direct flights. Are you working on that to launch them as soon as possible? How soon? If soon, can we know that?

And, President Obama, the U.S. has been issuing travel advisories against Kenya. This has had a devastating effect on its tourism. It's the second foreign exchange. And is the U.S.

planning to take it easy on that? And finally, what are your personal plans for Kenya after your Presidency? Thank you.

President Obama. With respect to direct flights, there are very specific protocols and security issues that have to be worked through and sorted out. We sent representatives of our Department of Transportation and Homeland Security to work with Kenyan officials. I think real progress has been made. I don't have a date certain in front of me, and I wouldn't want to make a guess, and then if we're late, you'll call me and say, you lied. [*Laughter*] So—but I think that—I anticipate that if we can get all the issues squared away, that this is something that has great potential and obviously would have a beneficial impact on U.S. travel to Kenya, both for business and for tourism.

With respect to the travel advisories, this is not something that I meddle with. This is something that our State Department and our intelligence communities make assessments on. They are provided in part for our Embassy staff and personnel so that they can be mindful of circumstances. But we are bound to also then provide the general public protection—or the same information that we provide our teams on the ground, for understandable reasons. I think the general public would be disturbed if we were saying one thing to folks who are working here and another thing to an ordinary tourist who was traveling.

I recognize the concerns, and I do think that despite the seriousness of the terrorist threat posed by al-Shabaab, that—in part because of media attention probably even more than travel advisories—that threat can oftentimes be exaggerated. And that's unfortunate. And part of my answer, I guess, to that problem is to come here and visit and to show this extraordinary country and the extraordinary progress that's been made.

But the specifics around travel advisories—those are a judgment call that are made by our experts. It's not something that I weigh in on. It's not something that is subject to political decisionmaking. And my solemn goal is to make sure that we are working urgently with President Kenyatta and the administration so that there's no need for the advisory because we will have greatly reduced these threats.

And there may be ways in which we can refine them so that, for example, traveling to game parks may be different than being in other circumstances. And that's something that we can always discuss and explore at a staff level.

Oh, did I—was there a third question? What are my plans? Well, I—here's what I can guarantee. I'll be back. The next time I'm back, I may not be wearing a suit. [*Laughter*] The first time I came here I was in jeans and a backpack. And one of the challenges of traveling and visiting Kenya is that I'm much more constrained now than I will be. And I think that you can anticipate not only me being back, but probably more important for everybody, Michelle being back, who—and Malia and Sasha coming back, because they have a great love for this country and its people and its beauty. And obviously, I've got family connections.

And my hope is, is that some of the philanthropic work that I do after my Presidency is over builds on some of the things that we've been doing now. I'm not going to stop being interested in the young people of Kenya and the young people of Africa and developing the talent and the leaders—talented leaders and entrepreneurs that are going to help make this country and the world prosper. And so you can anticipate that I'll continue to make those contributions where I can. Okay?

President Kenyatta. Great stuff.

President Obama. All right? Thank you very much, everybody. *Asante sana.*

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 4:46 p.m. at the State House. In his remarks, the President referred to his sister Auma.

Joint Statement—Kenya-United States Joint Commitment To Promote Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Efforts in Kenya
July 25, 2015

The Government of the Republic of Kenya (Government of Kenya) and the Government of the United States of America (U.S. Government), hereinafter referred to as the "two Governments,"

Recognizing the shared values and aspirations of our people for a government based on the essential values of democracy, rule of law, integrity and good governance;

Acknowledging that the two Governments have implemented over time a series of reforms geared towards improving governance, transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs;

Committing ourselves to these pledges, and to being accountable to our respective citizens, constitutions and laws;

Welcoming His Excellency President Kenyatta's stated commitment to reinvigorating a national campaign on good governance and anti-corruption, and his call to action in his State of the Nation Address on 26th March 2015.

Therefore commit as follows:

1. The two Governments reaffirm their shared objectives to improve governance by increasing transparency and accountability in Government, and commit to work together to combat corruption in Kenya. The two Governments plan to meet quarterly to review progress in implementing these commitments.

2. The two Governments intend to deepen our partnership to reduce corruption by focusing on four action areas:

I. Entrenching Good Governance and Combating Corruption

a. Deepening Partnerships for Good Governance

3. The Government of Kenya commits to continue with the momentum to combat corruption and advance good governance. The Government of Kenya commits to use its annual national engagement on anti-corruption to engage with all stakeholders to further a national agenda on governance and integrity, and to identify clear, workable, and measurable targets to reduce corruption, and review progress made on these targets.

4. The U.S. Government intends to work with like-minded partners to coordinate and maintain momentum in support of Kenya's anti-corruption efforts, and to promote the incorporation of anti-corruption efforts in existing donor coordination mechanisms focused on governance. The United States plans to work with the local American Chamber of Commerce to encourage them to establish a similar group for U.S. businesses investing in Kenya and domestic Kenyan businesses.

b. Institutionalizing Integrity and Anti-Corruption Mechanisms in all Facets of Government

5. The Government of Kenya commits to reinvigorate and expand as well as launch new national civic awareness and education programs for schools across the country by incorporating civic education and ethics in school curricula, and develop national public awareness campaigns.

6. The Government of Kenya commits to introduce compulsory ethics training for all public officials across all levels of government, and the National Anti-Corruption Steering Committee is to commence execution of this program within three months. This Committee, with support from accountability bodies, intends to create synergies among service delivery agencies and professional regulatory bodies to develop professional cadres within the civil service. The Committee also commits to support the development of a Code, or Codes, of Conduct for the civil service, with clear disciplinary penalties, to complement civil or criminal anti-corruption laws; delivering effective mandated ethics training as well as providing on-demand ethics advice and counseling through an ethics office or offices; and creating a system to gather lessons learned across

agencies in order to enhance these programs. The Government of Kenya intends to fully enforce the recently launched Code of Governance (Mwongozo) for State Corporations to institutionalize good governance, efficiency, transparency and accountability in the discharge of state corporations' mandates. The Government of Kenya plans to encourage county governments to adopt these same best practices.

7. To support Kenya's new compulsory ethics training program, the U.S. Government is prepared to assist the Government of Kenya in the development of ethics training curriculum, including through a series of consultations and mentorship opportunities.

8. The Government of Kenya, in consultation with all stakeholders, commits to review the financial and asset disclosure filings currently required by law, and to share them as necessary with the anti-economic-crime enforcement agencies, and to enable appropriate public access while taking into account constitutional and legal requirements for confidentiality and privacy. The Government of Kenya also seeks to review and strengthen the mechanisms and structures it employs to compensate public officials with the goal of reducing corruption and abuse of the government pay system, while also prioritizing recognition and support for exemplary public service in order to ensure that an enabling environment that recognizes effort, hard work and dedication is established.

9. The Government of Kenya plans to work toward joining the Egmont Group, a network of financial intelligence units (FIUs) that regularly meets to promote the development of FIUs and to cooperate, especially in the areas of information exchange, training and the sharing of expertise on money laundering and terrorist financing cases. The U.S. Government commits to support Kenya's efforts to join the Egmont Group and to work with the Government of Kenya in meeting the requirements for membership.

10. The Government of Kenya also commits to work with the World Bank to conduct a full risk assessment for money laundering and terrorism finance and to work with development partners to facilitate the full implementation of its new anti-money laundering rules and regulations within the Financial Action Taskforce (FATF) framework and to enforce the Act among all risk sectors and actors as appropriate.

11. The U.S. Government commits to provide best practices and advice on Kenya's anti-corruption legislation, including supporting the Kenyan Attorney General's interagency taskforce review of anti-corruption laws and policies for possible revisions to strengthen them.

II. Implementing and Reinforcing International Anti-corruption Initiatives and Standards

12. The Government of Kenya intends to join the Partnership on Illicit Finance (PIF) announced at the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, and the commitments included in this pledge constitute elements of its action plan under the PIF.

13. The two Governments believe that civil society should play a significant role in the review mechanism for the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), as well as UNCAC's mechanisms on asset recovery and prevention of transfers of proceeds of crime. The two Governments also commit to fully implementing the UNCAC, to conducting a transparent evaluation process under the UNCAC that includes all stakeholders, especially civil society, and to publish our UNCAC reviews.

14. The two Governments share a commitment to transparency in decision-making and financial flows related to the extractive industries, and intend to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to make this information publicly accessible and usable. The Government of Kenya commits to implementing the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) domestically and to identifying and enabling an EITI implementation focal point within the government within six months. The Government of Kenya also commits to adopt and implement a progressive and transparent policy and legislative framework for upstream, midstream, and downstream extractive activities, including transparency in licensing proce-

dures, publication of contracts, and environmental and conservation and labor requirements in line with international standards.

15. The United States is an EITI implementing country, and pledges to share its EITI experience with stakeholders in Kenya, including through exchanges of information between the United States and Kenyan governments and reciprocal visits to Washington and Nairobi, and via support to help local governments and civil society strengthen their understanding of EITI.

16. The Government of Kenya commits to release its second Open Government Partnership (OGP) National Action Plan within six months and to fully implement the commitments made in it. The Government of Kenya plans to link the OGP framework to its established multi-stakeholder governance working group mechanism to widen ownership, enhance drive, and ensure a participatory and inclusive OGP process.

17. The Government of Kenya is planning to complete a new African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) review based on a round of wide public consultation and a public self-assessment report.

III. Expanding the Use of Technology to Reduce Opportunities for Corruption

18. The Government of Kenya commits to leveraging technology to reduce or eradicate opportunities for corruption. The Government commits to finalizing the Government's complaints and corruption reporting web portal for citizen use by December 2015, and to publishing the data regarding the complaints it receives on this and other corruption-reporting websites, broken down by sector and geographic area, along with its response. The Government of Kenya commits to deepen ongoing interventions, such as progressively moving all in-bound government payments onto the Government Digital ePayments Platform, and widening the use of the i-Tax and Single Window platforms. At the same time, the Government of Kenya plans to fast track the rollout of digitization of government services under eGovernment to complement the ongoing ePayment program. The Government of Kenya commits to complete the digitization of lands, births, and death records by July 2016, and prioritize business registration records together with other high demanded public records starting August 2016. The Government commits to further enhance its efforts under the Integrated Financial Management Information System program towards full integration of all government financial systems, and to augment the audit and security components to guarantee the system's integrity. The Government commits to consult widely on the development of these various digital programs.

19. The Government of Kenya has committed to expanding its program to transparently utilize eProcurement systems to eliminate corruption in the awarding of contracts and licenses, and commits to finalizing its transition to eProcurement by June 2016. The Government of Kenya also commits to overhaul its whistleblower legislation.

20. The U.S. Government pledges, by the end of 2015, to undertake a scoping mission to evaluate the potential to provide assistance in Kenya under the Global Procurement Initiative, and to explore providing grant assistance to support the implementation of eGovernment systems. The U.S. Government plans to work with the Government of Kenya to seek suitable partnerships with international institutions to support this agenda.

21. In order to target corruption in the transportation sector, Kenya is rolling out an enhanced coordinated port operations program under the Border Control and Operations Coordination Committee to coordinate efforts that will lead to increased efficiency and transparency in customs and clearance procedures.

22. The U.S. Government plans to host a senior Kenyan delegation in Washington to discuss best practices in port management, and pledges to provide assistance to help improve port procedures, building on existing efforts. The U.S. Government also plans to incorporate anti-corruption modules into upcoming Reverse Trade Missions and other U.S. visits. In addition, the United States commits to work

with the Government of Kenya to explore the possibility of developing a Cargo Targeting System (CTS) in order to receive electronic cargo manifest data from shipping lines to target high-risk shipments based on risk profiles.

IV. Ensuring Accountability for Corruption and Mismanagement

23. The Government of Kenya will sustain its commitment to conduct thorough investigations into corruption cases and, where investigations adduce sufficient evidence, to professionally prosecute such corruption cases, including cases recommended by the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC).

24. The Government of Kenya recognizes and affirms the value of independent oversight bodies such as the EACC, the Public Procurement Oversight Authority, and the Independent Policing Oversight Authority. The Government of Kenya commits to comprehensively and progressively build the capacity of, and increasingly resource, these and all frontline agencies in the fight against corruption. This includes strengthening the capacity for forensic investigation and analysis.

25. The U.S. Government commits to aid in strengthening the capacity of a designated agency within the Government of Kenya to fight transnational crimes and to enable the agency to partner effectively with the U.S. Government to investigate corruption associated with wildlife trafficking, drug smuggling, money laundering, and other cross-border criminal activities. By late 2015, the U.S. Government also plans to provide technical assistance to the Independent Policing Oversight Authority, the National Police Service Commission, and the National Police Service's Internal Affairs Unit to help them enhance police accountability.

26. The Government of Kenya commits to accelerate work to strengthen the capacity of the Financial Reporting Centre (FRC) and Central Bank of Kenya to track illicit financial flows, including outfitting the FRC with the requisite platform to run anti-money laundering software, and welcomes U.S. Government assistance to do so. The U.S. Government pledges to provide best practices and advice to Kenya's FRC, including by conducting an Analyst Exchange workshop in Nairobi in late 2015 to augment the knowledge of the FRC's cadre of analysis experts, and to evaluate possible additional engagement. The United States also pledges to procure software for the FRC to improve the analysis of suspicious transactions and better communicate with other countries' FRCs once the requisite platform is in place. At the request of the FRC for a comprehensive Anti-Money Laundering/Countering the Financing of Terrorism technical assistance program, the U. S. Government commits to conduct an in-country assessment to determine the feasibility of such an engagement.

27. The respective Central Authorities for the Government of Kenya (the Office of the Attorney General) and the U.S. Government (the Department of Justice, Office of International Affairs) pledge to meet to discuss best practices and to improve bilateral cooperation in criminal cases, with a focus on mutual legal assistance and extradition. The Government of Kenya pledges to review and expand its mutual legal assistance framework and partnership with key strategic countries. This work would especially target enabling asset seizures and recovery, detection and investigations, and arrests and prosecutions.

28. The U.S. Government pledges to continue to work with the Government of Kenya on individual criminal cases of mutual interest and to share available information on illicit finance and individuals and entities involved in money laundering and terror financing with appropriate Kenyan ministries and agencies, as appropriate. The two Governments recognize that taking these steps can enhance the ability of both countries to investigate, apprehend and successfully prosecute persons suspected of corruption-related crimes.

29. The activities in this commitment are to be implemented consistent with our respective constitutions and laws.

NOTE: The joint statement referred to Attorney General Githu Muigai of Kenya. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks at a State Dinner Hosted by President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya in Nairobi, Kenya

July 25, 2015

President Kenyatta. Thank you very much, Amina. And I appreciate your sentiments. President Barack Obama, President Mwai Kibaki, our distinguished visitors, distinguished guests: Let me begin once again, as I have said severally since the start of this visit, on behalf of the people of the Republic of Kenya, that we are once again delighted to welcome you to this country and to this city. And I know and strongly believe that you have felt the warmth of our people and, indeed, especially you, President Obama, the tremendous joy at your presence here with us in Nairobi and in Kenya. Welcome and welcome again.

Mr. President, this is not your first trip to Kenya. And indeed, we have heard severally, Amina has just mentioned, and you yourself have told us that you have been here. But yesterday you returned riding on the wings of history as a President of historic consequence for America, for Africa, and most importantly, for Kenya.

As a world leader who has grappled with great challenges of this age and as a builder of bridges, and to you once again, we say, *karibu na sana Kenya.*

The people of Kenya and the United States share such an abiding love of freedom that we have made grim sacrifices to secure it for our children. We then chose to weave our diverse cultures into a national tapestry of harmonious coexistence. Our paths have not been easy. We have not realized these values in full measure, as indeed we have discussed. But our record has been one of steady progress.

Indeed, Kenya has been inspired by the immense accomplishments of the United States in its 239 years of independence. We, as a country, are much younger. It has been a mere half century since the dawn of our republic. Yet, in that time, we've had the foundation built for an enduring democracy. On our journey, we have been strengthened by the support of our friends, and few of them have been closer than the United States.

In 1959, one of our own national heroes, Tom Mboya, shared a stage with Martin Luther King, Jr., and he said that Africans and the Americans of the civil rights movement were united in a common search for political freedom. He would then join hands with Senator John F. Kennedy, other American philanthropists and activists, to bring hundreds of young Kenyans to American universities. He hoped to prepare a group of educated and committed Kenyans who would complete the transition from colonial domination to self-government.

His hopes were more than fulfilled. The Nobel Laureate, the late environmentalist, Professor Wangari Maathai, was one of those who traveled. Another was Barack Obama Senior, your father, who had the same audacious hope that you have and spoke powerfully about it: to make something of his immense promise and to bring development and freedom to his people.

To this day, Kenyans still travel to the United States in search of education. Some of those assembled here went to American colleges, and Kenyans now form the second largest group of students from Africa in the United States. Indeed, Mr. President, you and I have constituents in common. [*Laughter*] The largest part of our diaspora, many holding dual citizenships, and who are now entitled to vote in Kenya as well—[*laughter*]—reside in America.

America has shown great generosity in aiding our development efforts and has supported our democratic aspirations. Our relationship has been unbroken for half a century. And, Mr. President, I believe that you and I can deepen this relationship. And together, we can make this region safe again. We can secure democracy, and we can bring our entrepreneurs and investors together for our common prosperity.

I, indeed, look forward to continuing our conversation in the coming weeks and months. And indeed, before I conclude, I must say that this is destiny in many ways. Fifty-some years ago, I don't think anybody would ever have

realized what we share here today. As those who left Kenyan shores, aided and supported by the American brothers and sisters who shared the very ideals that this country then was fighting for and who welcomed our own men and women at the time, I don't think many ever realized that one day a product of that initiative to support our freedom struggle would one day return and be an engine to propel and to transform the African Continent.

This shows the deep partnership that exists between our two countries. This shows that the values we state today, that we share, are not new. These are values that both our nations hold dear. And the truth is, these are values that many of us in our country, Kenya, have chosen to forget. Indeed, it is my wish that today, as we welcome the President of the United States, whose father one day left our shores, and who today returns as President of one of the greatest nations in this world, that we too may learn that greatness is also amongst us if we could just come together, forget our narrow differences, and look towards the future with hope and build on the potential, especially of our young people.

And as I was telling the President earlier, and it still remains my strong belief, as many have said, you know, President Obama has not done enough for Africa—I tend to disagree with that statement. Because "enough" is not about how much money you put on the table. That's not the issue. Africa no longer wants to hold out its hand, begging bowl in place, how much are you going to put.

What President Barack Obama has given back to us is a belief and a hope that, empowered, we can do and achieve for ourselves. He has given us the tools and the belief that it is possible, through our own initiative and hard work, that we can take control of our own destiny, and that we can lead change not just on our continent, but in the world.

I don't think there could be a bigger gift. And indeed, as I say that we shall sadly see you depart tomorrow, we wish you safe travels. We look forward to having you back at some stage in the near future. [*Laughter*] And please, on behalf of the people of this republic, may you convey our warmest regards to your wife Michelle, to Malia and Sasha, and to say that Kenyans are also looking forward to welcoming them to our shores sometime in the very near future.

And with those very few and brief remarks—[*laughter*]—indeed, it is now my pleasure and my honor to ask you all to be up standing and to raise a toast to the President of the United States of America, to the friendship and partnership between our two countries and peoples, now and always.

To the President.

[*At this point, President Kenyatta offered a toast.*]

President Obama. Thank you so much. *Habari ya jioni.* [*Laughter*] President Kenyatta, the lovely Madame First Lady, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen: I want to once again just express my deepest gratitude to you and the Kenyan people for the incredible hospitality you have shown to me and my delegation, including the Members of Congress who are here today and are doing outstanding work. In my visits here as a younger man, I could have never imagined the outpouring of friendship that I feel today. And so I feel, like my given African name, to be truly blessed.

The presence of the Members of Congress who are here today, I think it describes and expresses the deep support for a strong partnership with Africa and with Kenya. We were able to get the AGOA bill passed. And those of you who know American politics, there aren't too many things where Republicans and Democrats agree these days. [*Laughter*] But expanding trade and investment and deepening our relationship with Africa is something that garnered bipartisan support. And it's an indication of how the American people feel.

It's a—part of what makes this a special evening for me is the presence of my family members who are here. My grandmother, Mama Sarah, who told me I had to come back to Kenya. And when she says you should do something, generally, you have to do it. [*Laughter*] I've told this story before—the first time that I visited Kogelo, we—Auma and I and my brothers were there. She—Mama Sarah speaks Swa-

hili and Luo, and I speak neither—[*laughter*]—and so Auma was serving as a translator. And I think about a half a day had passed before suddenly, she turns to Auma and says something. And Auma starts laughing, and I say, what did she say? She says, he goes to Harvard; if he's so smart, how come he can't talk to his grandmother? [*Laughter*] Which was a good point.

My siblings are here, aunts, uncles. And so tonight I welcome all of them to a somewhat unusual Obama family reunion. I suspect that some of my critics back home are suggesting that I'm back here to look for my birth certificate. [*Laughter*] That is not the case. [*Laughter*]

But what is true is, is that obviously there are emotions to a visit like this. Memories come rushing back. When I was in college, and my father was here, I wrote him a letter telling him of my hope to visit. And he wrote me back, and he said, "Dear Son, even if it is only for a few days, the important thing is that you know your people." Now, he died in an accident before I was able to make that trip. But in fact, when I came, I did get to know them, the people of Kenya. And although, once again, I'm here only for a few days, I remain grateful for that relationship.

I've seen the resolve and the determination to pull together, under a new Constitution, as one people. I've seen your dynamism, as you've built the largest economy in East Africa. And I've seen the resilience, as in the recent reopening of the Westgate Mall, which shows that the spirit of the Kenyan people cannot be broken.

And I've seen it in the friendship between our peoples, particularly our young people. As many of you know, our Mandela Fellows program invites promising African youth to the United States so they can develop skills and training, and forge relationships as future leaders here in Africa. And we learn from them, as well. And it's one of the most important ways that we invest in Africa's future. It's something I'm very passionate about personally.

In fact, at this very moment, as part of this program, there are 40 young Kenyans across the United States living and working and learning, but also sharing Kenyan culture with their American hosts. Americans are learning Swahili. They're eating chapatti—[*laughter*]—and they're listening to Kenyan music. In California, they've been dancing to "Sura Yako."

So here tonight, and across the United States, Kenyans and Americans are coming together. We're understanding each other better. We're finding new ways to partner. And I believe that if we can build on what we've accomplished on this visit, then we can achieve even more in the years to come: for our people, for our beautiful lands, for our freedom, for peace.

I was reflecting on what President Kenyatta said about the past and history. And our fathers were people who lived at the same time and went through independence of this country at the same time, took different paths obviously—my father was significantly younger—and it's true that it would have been hard for them to imagine how their sons might be sitting here today. [*Laughter*]

But there's an expression that says we plant a tree not because we will enjoy its shade, but because our children and grandchildren will.

And so I'd like to propose a toast not only to this generation of Kenyans and Africans, not only to future generations of Kenyans and Africans and Americans, but also to our forefathers and our foremothers who laid the groundwork, who planted the seed so that we could enjoy a little bit of shade.

To the people of Kenya and to the people of the United States of America, *munga abariki Kenya.*

[*President Obama offered a toast.*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:21 p.m. at the State House. In his remarks, he referred to Margaret Gakuo Kenyatta, wife of President Kenyatta. He also referred to his grandmother Sarah Onyango Obama and sister Auma. President Kenyatta referred to Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs and International Trade Amina Chawahir Mohamed and former President Mwai Kibaki of Kenya. A portion of President Kenyatta's remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

Remarks in Nairobi, Kenya
July 26, 2015

The President. Hey!

Audience members. Hey!

The President. Habari zenu!

Audience members. Habari zenu!

The President. Wa kenya mpo? It is great to be back in Kenya. Thank you so much for this extraordinary welcome. I know it took a few years, but as President I try to keep my promises, and I said I was going to come, and I'm here. So—[*applause*].

And, everybody, go ahead and have a seat. I'm going to be talking for a while. [*Laughter*] Relax.

I want to thank my sister Auma for a wonderful introduction. I'm so glad that she could be with us here today. And it was—as she said, it was Auma who first guided me through Kenya almost 30 years ago.

To President Kenyatta, I want to thank you once again for the hospitality that you've shown to me and for our work together on this visit, and for being here today. It's a great honor.

I am proud to be the first American President to come to Kenya, and of course, I'm the first Kenyan American to be President of the United States. [*Laughter*] That goes without saying.

Audience member. We love you, Obama!

President Obama. I love you back. I do.

But as Auma was saying, the first time I came to Kenya, things were a little different. When I arrived at Kenyatta Airport, the airline had lost my bags. [*Laughter*] That doesn't happen on Air Force One. [*Laughter*] They always have my luggage on Air Force One. [*Laughter*] As she said, Auma picked me up in an old Volkswagon Beetle, and I think the entire stay I was here, it broke down four or five times. [*Laughter*] We'd be on the highway; we'd have to call the *jua kali*. He'd bring his tools. We'd be sitting there, waiting. And I slept on a cot in her apartment. Instead of eating at fancy banquets with the President, we were drinking tea and eating *ugali*—[*laughter*]—and *sukuma wiki* and—[*laughter*].

So there wasn't a lot of luxury. Sometimes, the lights would go out.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*].

President Obama. They still do—is that what someone said? [*Laughter*] But there was something more important than luxury on that first trip, and that was a sense of being recognized, being seen. I was a young man, and I was just a few years out of university. I had worked as a community organizer in low-income neighborhoods in Chicago. I was about to go to law school. And when I came here, in many ways I was a Westerner, I was an American, unfamiliar with my father and his birthplace, really disconnected from half of my heritage. And at that airport, as I was trying to find my luggage, there was a woman there who worked for the airlines, and she was helping fill out the forms, and she saw my name and she looked up, and she asked if I was related to my father, who she had known. And that was the first time that my name meant something. All right? And that it was recognized.

And over the course of several weeks, I'd meet my brothers and aunts and uncles. I traveled to Alego, the village where my family was from. I saw the graves of my father and my grandfather. And I learned things about their lives that I could have never learned through books. And in many ways, their lives offered snapshots of Kenya's history, but they also told us something about the future.

My grandfather, for example, he was a cook for the British. And I—as I went through some of his belongings when I went up country, I found the passbook he had had to carry as a domestic servant. It listed his age and his height, his tribe, listed the number of teeth he had missing. [*Laughter*] And he was referred to as a boy, even though he was a grown man, in that passbook.

And he was in the King's African Rifles during the Second World War and was taken to the far reaches of the British Empire, all the way to Burma. And back home after the war, he was eventually detained for a time because

he was linked to a group that opposed British rule. And eventually, he was released. He forged a home for himself and his family. He earned the respect of his village, lived a life of dignity, although he had a well-earned reputation for being so strict that everybody was scared of him and he became estranged from part of his family.

So that was his story. And then, my father came of age as Kenyans were pursuing independence, and he was proud to be a part of that liberation generation. And next to my grandfather's papers, I found letters that he had written to 30 American universities asking for a chance to pursue his dream and get a scholarship. And ultimately, one university gave him that chance, the University of Hawaii. And he would go on to get an education and then return home.

And here, at first, he found success as an economist and worked with the Government. But ultimately, he found disappointment, in part because he couldn't reconcile the ideas that he had for his young country with the hard realities that had confronted him.

And I think sometimes about what these stories tell us, what the history and the past tell us about the future. And they show the enormous barriers to progress that so many Kenyans faced just one or two generations ago. This is a young country. We were talking last night at dinner; the President's father was the first President. We're only a generation removed. And the daily limitations, and sometimes humiliations, of colonialism, that's recent history. The corruption and cronyism and tribalism that sometimes confront young nations, that's recent history.

But what these stories also tell us is an arc of progress: from foreign rule to independence, from isolation to education and engagement with a wider world. It speaks of incredible progress. So we have to know the history of Kenya, just as we Americans have to know our American history. All people have to understand where they come from. But we all—also have to remember why these lessons are important.

We know our history so that we can learn from it. We learn our history because we understand the sacrifices that were made before so that when we make sacrifices we understand we're doing it on behalf of future generations.

There's a proverb that says, "We have not inherited this land from our forebears, we have borrowed it from our children." In other words, we study the past so it can guide us into the future and inspire us to do better.

And when it comes to the people of Kenya, particularly the youth, I believe there is no limit to what you can achieve. A young, ambitious Kenyan today should not have to do what my grandfather did and serve a foreign master. You don't need to do what my father did and leave your home in order to get a good education and access to opportunity. Because of Kenya's progress, because of your potential, you can build your future right here, right now.

Now, like any country, Kenya is far from perfect, but it has come so far in just my lifetime. After a bitter struggle, Kenyans claimed their independence just a few years after I was born. And after decades of one-party rule, Kenya embraced a multiparty system in the 1990s, just as I was beginning my own political career in the United States.

Tragically, just under a decade ago, Kenya was nearly torn apart by violence at the same time that I was running for my first campaign for President. And I remember hearing the reports of thousands of innocent people being killed or driven from their homes. And from a distance, it seemed like the Kenya that I knew—a Kenya that was able to reach beyond ethnic and tribal lines—that it might split apart across those lines of tribe and ethnicity.

But look what happened. The people of Kenya chose not to be defined by the hatreds of the past. You chose a better history. The voices of ordinary people and political leaders and civil society did not eliminate all these divisions, but you addressed the divisions and differences peacefully. And a new Constitution was put in place, declaring that "every person has inherent dignity and the right to have that dignity respected and protected." A competitive election went forward, not without

problems, but without the violence that so many had feared. In other words, Kenyans chose to stay together. You chose the path of *harambee.*

And in part because of this political stability, Kenya's economy is also emerging, and the entrepreneurial spirit that people rely on to survive in the streets of Kibera can now be seen in new businesses across the country, from the city square to the smallest villages. M-Pesa is changing the way people use money. New investment is making Kenya a hub for regional trade. When I came here as a U.S. Senator, I pointed out that South Korea's economy was the same as Kenya's when I was and then was 40 times larger than Kenya's. Think about that. It started at the same place; South Korea had gone here, and Kenya was here. But today, that gap has been cut in half just in the last decade, which means Kenya is making progress.

And meanwhile, Kenya continues to carve out a distinct place in the community of nations: as a source of peacekeepers for places torn apart by conflict; a host for refugees driven from their homes; a leader for conservation, following the footprints of Wangari Maathai. Kenya is one of the places on this continent that truly observes freedom of the press, and there are fearless journalists and courageous civil society members. And in the United States, we see the legacy of Kip Keino every time a Kenyan wins one of our marathons. And maybe the First Lady of Kenya is going to win one soon. [*Laughter*] I told the President he has to start running with his wife. [*Laughter*] We want him to stay fit. [*Laughter*]

So there's much to be proud of, much progress to lift up. It's a good-news story. But we also know the progress is not complete. There are still problems that shadow ordinary Kenyans every day, challenges that can deny you your livelihood and sometimes deny you lives.

As in America and so many countries around the globe, economic growth has not always been broadly shared. Sometimes, people at the top do very well, but ordinary people still struggle. Today, a young child in Nyanza Province is four times more likely to die than a child in Central Province, even though they are equal in dignity in the eyes of God. That's a gap that has to be closed. A girl in Rift Valley is far less likely to attend secondary school than a girl in Nairobi. That's a gap that has to be closed. Across the country, one study shows corruption costs Kenyans 250,000 jobs every year, because every shilling that's paid as a bribe could be put into the pocket of somebody who's actually doing an honest day's work.

And despite the hard-earned political progress that I spoke of, that—those political gains still have to be protected. New laws and restrictions could close off the space where civil society gives individual citizens a voice and holds leaders accountable. Old tribal divisions and ethnic divisions can still be stirred up. I want to be very clear here: A politics that's based solely on tribe and ethnicity is a politics that's doomed to tear a country apart. It is a failure, a failure of imagination.

Of course, here in Kenya, we also know the specter of terrorism has touched far too many lives. And we remember the Americans and Kenyans who died side by side in the attack on our Embassy in the nineties. We remember the innocent Kenyans who were taken from us at Westgate Mall. We weep for the nearly 150 people slaughtered at Garissa, including so many students who had such a bright future before them. We honor the memory of so many other innocent Kenyans whose lives have been lost in this struggle.

So Kenya is at a crossroads, a moment filled with peril, but also enormous promise. And with the rest of my time here today, I'd like to talk about how you can seize the moment, how you can make sure we leave behind a world that's better, a world that we've borrowed from our children.

When I first came to sub-Saharan Africa as President, I made clear my strong belief that the future of Africa is up to Africans. For too long, I think that many looked to the outside for salvation and focused on somebody else being at fault for the problems of the continent. And as my sister said, ultimately, we are each responsible for our own destiny. And I'm here as President of a country that sees Kenya as an

important partner. I'm here as a friend who wants Kenya to succeed.

And the pillars of that success are clear: strong democratic governance, development that provides opportunity for all people and not just some, a sense of national identity that rejects conflict for a future of peace and reconciliation.

And today, we can see that future for Kenya on the horizon. But tough choices are going to have to be made in order to arrive at that destination. In the United States, I always say that what makes America exceptional is not the fact that we're perfect, it's the fact that we struggle to improve. We're self-critical. We work to live up to our highest values and ideals, knowing that we're not always going to achieve them perfectly, but we keep on trying to perfect our Union.

And what's true for America is also true for Kenya. You can't be complacent and accept the world just as it is. You have to imagine what the world might be and then push and work towards that future. Progress requires that you honestly confront the dark corners of our own past, extend rights and opportunities to more of your citizens, see the differences and diversity of this country as a strength, just as we in America try to see the diversity of our country as a strength and not a weakness. So you can choose the path to progress, but it requires making some important choices.

First and foremost, it means continuing down the path of a strong, more inclusive, more accountable and transparent democracy.

Democracy begins with a peacefully elected government. It begins with elections, but it doesn't stop with elections. So your Constitution offers a roadmap to governance that's more responsive to the people, through protections against unchecked power, more power in the hands of local communities. For this system to succeed, there also has to be space for citizens to exercise their rights.

And we saw the strength of Kenya's civil society in the last election, when groups collected reports of incitement so that violence could be stopped before it spun out of control. And the ability of citizens to organize and advocate for change, that's the oxygen upon which democracy depends. Democracy is sometimes messy, and for leaders, sometimes, it's frustrating. Democracy means that somebody is always complaining about something. [*Laughter*] Nobody is ever happy in a democracy about their government. If you make one person happy, somebody else is unhappy. Then, sometimes, somebody who you made happy, later on, now they're not happy. [*Laughter*] They say, what have you done for me lately? [*Laughter*] But that's the nature of democracy. That's why it works, is because it's constantly challenging leaders to up their game and to do better.

And such civic participation and freedom is also essential for rooting out the cancer of corruption. Now, I want to be clear. Corruption is not unique to Kenya. [*Laughter*] There—I mean, I want everybody to understand that there's no country that's completely free of corruption. Certainly, here in the African Continent, there are many countries that deal with this problem. And I want to assure you, I speak about it wherever I go, not just here in Kenya. So I don't want everybody to get too sensitive. [*Laughter*]

But the fact is, too often, here in Kenya, as is true in other places, corruption is tolerated because that's how things have always been done. People just think that that is sort of the normal state of affairs. And there was a time in the United States where that was true too. My hometown of Chicago was infamous for Al Capone and the mob and organized crime corrupting law enforcement. But what happened was that over time, people got fed up, and leaders stood up and they said, we're not going to play that game anymore. And you changed a culture, and you changed habits.

Here in Kenya, it's time to change habits and decisively break that cycle. Because corruption holds back every aspect of economic and civil life. It's an anchor that weighs you down and prevents you from achieving what you could. If you need to pay a bribe and hire somebody's brother—who's not very good and doesn't come to work—in order to start a business, well, that's going to create less jobs for everybody. If electricity is going to one

neighborhood because they're well connected and not another neighborhood, that's going to limit development of the country as a whole. If someone in public office is taking a cut that they don't deserve, that's taking away from those who are paying their fair share.

So this is not just about changing one law, although, it's important to have laws on the books that are actually being enforced. It's important that not only low-level corruption is punished, but folks at the top, if they are taking from the people, that has to be addressed as well. But it's not something that is just fixed by laws or that any one person can fix. It requires a commitment by the entire nation—leaders and citizens—to change habits and to change culture.

Tough laws need to be on the books. And the good news is, your Government is taking some important steps in the right direction. People who break the law and violate the public trust need to be prosecuted. NGOs have to be allowed to operate who shine a spotlight on what needs to change. And ordinary people have to stand up and say, "Enough is enough, it's time for a better future." And as you take these steps, I promise that America will continue to be your partner in supporting investments in strong, democratic institutions.

Now, we're also going to work with you to pursue the second pillar of progress, and that is development that extends economic opportunity and dignity for all of Kenya's people.

America partners with Kenya in areas where you're making enormous progress, and we focus on what Kenyans can do for themselves and building capacity: on entrepreneurship, where Kenya is becoming an engine for innovation; on access to power, where Kenya is developing clean energy that can reach more people; on the important issue of climate change, where Kenya's recent goal to reduce its emissions has put it in the position of being a leader on the continent; on food security, where Kenyan crops are producing more to meet the demands of your people and a global market; and on health, where Kenya has struck huge blows against HIV/AIDS and other diseases, while building up the capacity to provide better care in your communities.

America is also partnering with you on an issue that's fundamental to Kenya's future: We are investing in youth. We are investing in the young people of Kenya and the young people of this continent. Robert F. Kennedy once said, "It is a revolutionary world that we live in," and "it is the young people who must take the lead." It's the young people who must take the lead.

So, through our Young African Leaders Initiative, we are empowering and connecting young people from across the continent who are filled with energy and optimism and idealism and are going to take Africa to new heights. And these young people, they're not weighed down by the old ways. They're creating a new path. And these are the elements for success in this 21st century.

To continue down this path of progress, it will be vital for Kenya to recognize that no country can achieve its full potential unless it draws on the talents of all its people, and that must include the half of Kenyans—maybe a little more than half—who are women and girls. Now, I'm going to spend a little time on this just for a second. Every country and every culture has traditions that are unique and help make that country what it is. But just because something is a part of your past doesn't make it right. It doesn't mean that it defines your future.

Look at us in the United States. Recently, we've been having a debate about the Confederate flag. Some of you may be familiar with this. This was a symbol for those States who fought against the Union to preserve slavery. Now, as a piece of—as a historical artifact, it's important. But some have argued that it's just a symbol of heritage that should fly in public spaces. The fact is, it was a flag that flew over an army that fought to maintain a system of slavery and racial subjugation. So we should understand our history, but we should also recognize that it sends a bad message to those who were liberated from slavery and oppression.

And in part because of an unspeakable tragedy that took place recently, where a young

man who was a fan of the Confederate flag and racial superiority shot helpless people in a church, more and more Americans of all races are realizing now that that flag should come down. Just because something is a tradition doesn't make it right.

Well, so around the world, there is a tradition of repressing women and treating them differently and not giving them the same opportunities and husbands beating their wives and children not being sent to school. Those are traditions. Treating women and girls as second-class citizens, those are bad traditions. They need to change. They're holding you back.

Treating women as second-class citizens is a bad tradition. It holds you back. There's no excuse for sexual assault or domestic violence. There's no reason that young girls should suffer genital mutilation. There's no place in civilized society for the early or forced marriage of children. These traditions may date back centuries; they have no place in the 21st century.

These are issues of right and wrong in any culture. But they're also issues of success and failure. Any nation that fails to educate its girls or employ its women and allowing them to maximize their potential is doomed to fall behind in a global economy.

You know, we're in a sports center. Imagine if you have a team and you don't let half of the team play. [*Laughter*] That's stupid. [*Laughter*] That makes no sense. And the evidence shows that communities that give their daughters the same opportunities as their sons, they are more peaceful, they are more prosperous, they develop faster, they are more likely to succeed. That's true in America. That's true here in Kenya. It doesn't matter.

And that's why one of the most successful development policies you can pursue is giving girls an education and removing the obstacles that stand between them and their dreams. And by the way, if you educate girls, they grow up to be moms, and they, because they're educated, are more likely to produce educated children. So Kenya will not succeed if it treats women and girls as second-class citizens. I want to be very clear about that.

Now, this leads me to the third pillar of progress, and that's choosing a future of peace and reconciliation. Now, there are real threats out there. President Kenyatta and I spent a lot of time discussing the serious threat from al-Shabaab that Kenya faces. The United States faces similar threats of terrorism. We are grateful for the sacrifices made by Kenyans on the front lines as part of AMISOM. We're proud of the efforts that we're making to strengthen Kenya's capabilities through our new Security Governance Initiative. We're going to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with you in this fight against terrorism for as long as it takes.

But, as I mentioned yesterday, it is important to remember that violent extremists want us to turn against one another. That's what terrorists typically try to exploit. They know that they are a small minority; they know that they can't win conventionally. So what they try to do is target societies where they can exploit divisions. That's what happens in Iraq. That's what happens around the world. That's what happened in Northern Ireland. Terrorists who try to sow chaos, they must be met with force, and they must also be met, though, with a forceful commitment to uphold the rule of law and respect for human rights and to treat everybody who's peaceful and law-abiding fairly and equally.

Extremists who prey on distrust must be defeated by communities who stand together and stand for something different. And I'll—the most important example here is, is that the United States and Kenya both have Muslim minorities, but those minorities make enormous contributions to our countries. These are our brothers; they are our sisters. And so, in both our countries, we have to reject calls that allow us to be divided.

This is true for any diverse society. And Kenya is rich with diversity, with many dozens of tribes and ethnicities and languages and religious groups. And time and again, just as we've seen the dangers of religious or ethnic violence, we've seen that Kenya is stronger when Kenyans stand united, with a sense of national identity. That was the case on December 12, 1963, when cities and villages across this

country celebrated the birth of a nation. It was true in 2010, when Kenya replaced the anarchy of ethnic violence with the order of a new Constitution.

So we can all appreciate our own identities, our bloodlines, our beliefs, our backgrounds. That is—that tapestry is what makes us who we are. But the history of Africa, which is both the cradle of human progress and a crucible of conflict, shows us that when define ourselves narrowly, in opposition to somebody just because they're of a different tribe or race or religion, and we ignore who is a good person or a bad person, are they working hard or not, are they honest or not, are they peaceful or violent—when we start making distinctions solely based on status and not what people do, then we're taking a wrong path, and we inevitably suffer in the end.

This is why Martin Luther King called on people to be judged not by the color of their skin, but the content of their character. And in the same way, people should not be judged by their last name or their religious faith, but by their content of their character and how they behave. Are they good citizens? Are they good people?

In the United States, we embrace the motto: "E pluribus unum"—in Latin, that means, out of many, one. In Kenya, *harambee*—we are in this together. Whatever the challenge, you will be stronger if you face it not as Christians or Muslims, Masai, Kikuyu, Luo, any other tribe, but as Kenyans. And ultimately, that unity is the source of strength that will empower you to seize this moment of promise. That's what will help you root out corruption. That's what will strengthen democratic institutions. That's what will help you combat inequality. That's what will help you extend opportunity and educate youth and face down threats and embrace reconciliation.

So I want to say particularly to the young people here today, Kenya is on the move. Africa is on the move. You are poised to play a bigger role in this world, as the shadows of the past are replaced by the light that you offer an increasingly interconnected world. And in the light of this new day, we have to learn to see ourselves in one another. We have to see that we are connected, our fates are bound together. Because, in the end, we're all part of one tribe: the human tribe. And no matter who we are or where we come from or what we look like or who we love or what God we worship, we're connected. Our fates are bound up with one another.

Kenya holds within it all that diversity. And with diversity, sometimes comes difficulty. But I look to Kenya's future filled with hope. And I'm hopeful because of you, the people of Kenya, especially the young people.

There are some amazing examples of what's going on right now with young people. I'm hopeful because of a young man named Richard Ruto Todosia. Richard helped build Yes Youth Can. I liked the phrase, Yes Youth Can. It became one of the most prominent civil society organizations in Kenya, with over 1 million members. And after the violence of 2007, 2008, Yes Youth Can stood up to incitement, helped bring opportunity to young people in places that were scarred by conflict. That's the kind of young leadership that we need.

I'm hopeful because of a young woman named Josephine Kulea. So Josephine founded Samburu Girls Foundation. And she's already helped to rescue over a thousand girls from abuse and forced marriage and helped place them in schools. A member of the Samburu tribe herself, she's personally planned rescue missions to help girls as young as 6 years old. And she explains that "the longer a girl is in school, everything for her—for her income, for her family, for this country—everything changes." She gives me hope.

I'm hopeful because of a young woman named Jamila Abass. So Jamila founded M-Farm, which is a mobile platform that is already used by over 14,000 people across Kenya. M-Farm makes it easy for farmers to get information that lets them match their crops with what the market demands. And studies show that it can help farmers double their sales. So here's what Jamila said: "I love Kenya because you feel you are home anywhere you go."

Home anywhere you go. That's the Kenya that welcomed me nearly 30 years ago as a

young man. You helped make me feel at home. And standing here today as President of the United States, when I think about those young people and all the young people in attendance here, you still make me feel at home. And I'm confident that your future is going to be written across this country and across this continent by young people like you, young men and women who don't have to struggle under a colonial power, who don't have to look overseas to realize your dreams. Yes, you can realize your dreams right here, right now.

"We have not inherited this land from our forebears, we have borrowed it from our children." So now is the time for us to do the hard work of living up to that inheritance, of building a Kenya where the inherent dignity of every person is respected and protected, and there's no limit to what a child can achieve.

I am here to tell you that the United States of America will be a partner for you every step of the way.

God bless you. Thank you. *Asante sana.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 12 p.m. in the Safaricom Indoor Arena. In his remarks, he referred to his sister Auma; Kenyan marathon runner Hezekiah Kipchoge Keino; Margaret Gakuo Kenyatta, wife of President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya; and Dylann S. Roof, suspected gunman in the June 17 shooting at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, SC. He also referred to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session With Civil Society Leaders at Kenyatta University in Nairobi
July 26, 2015

The President. Well, hello everybody!

Audience members. Hello!

Audience member. Jambo!

The President. Jambo! [*Laughter*] It's good to see you! The—well, this is a very good-looking group. [*Laughter*] So it's wonderful to be with all of you. My name is Barack Obama. And I—[*laughter*]—in case you didn't know. I want to, first of all, begin by thanking Kenyatta University for hosting us here today. We are very grateful. And the vice chancellor is here; Madam Vice Chancellor, thank you.

And before we get started, I want to point out that this is one of our first regional centers for the Young African Leaders program—the Young African Leaders Initiative, or YALI—that we're doing. As many of you know, this is one of my labors of love here in Africa, an outgrowth of some of the work that we had been doing. Seeing the incredible contributions that young leaders were making in so many countries, we thought let's bring them together and give them opportunities to learn from each other and network and access resources so that they can then, in their home countries, be able to accomplish remarkable things.

And so we're really excited about that. So we thank the university for allowing us to use these facilities for these outstanding, outstanding people.

I just gave a very long speech. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. We saw it.

The President. You're saying it was also too long? Is that what you're saying? [*Laughter*] She nodded. She was all, like, yes, it was very long. [*Laughter*]

The—so because you just saw my speech, it doesn't make sense for me to give a whole other speech. I'm really here more to listen and to learn. But I do want to just make a couple of brief remarks at the top. And then, what I'm going to do is I'm going to call on a number of you. I've got a few names already to get us started, and then depending on how much time we have, then I'll try to see if I can call on some additional persons.

America has historically been a country of people who participate in the lives of their communities and their societies. And it's one of the things that make us, I believe, a great nation. There's a famous French writer named Alec de Tocqueville, who traveled to the United States

and wrote a very famous book called "Democracy in America." And the point that he made in this book during the course of his travels was that what made America a democracy was not just that it had elections, but that it was a society of joiners and volunteers and people who wanted constantly to be involved in making their communities better. And if there was an injustice, they wanted to do something about it. And they would form organizations and they would form town halls and disseminate information, so that what the Government did was obviously important, but what was just as important was what individual citizens were able to do to create a fabric of mutual concern and regard and advocacy that would shape government policy and would shape how societies were organized.

And almost all the progress that America has made in expanding freedom and opportunity has grown as a result of that bottom-up civic participation: the civil rights movement, the women's rights movement, the movement most recently to make sure that our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters have equal rights, the movement to end wars in some cases, the movement to provide better resources for poor children. And there was the halfway house movement and the movement to—the settlement house movement, rather, and to make sure that children and orphans were properly cared for. The movement to public education and public universities. So many of—the environmental movement. So many of these things arose because ordinary citizens started to get together and speak out and press their demands on their government. And eventually, politicians responded.

And I got my start in public life not as an elected official, but as a community organizer in a poor neighborhood in Chicago. And I would work with churches and community groups to try to improve the school system or bring affordable housing. And we weren't always completely successful, but it taught me the importance of the voices of ordinary people when they come together to create a better vision for the future.

And that's why I think civil society is so important. And that's why I emphasized it in the speech that I made today. And I—this is something that I emphasize wherever I go: Democracy does not stop on election day. For a real democracy to work, and for a society to thrive and continually improve, it requires that people continue to participate. And there have to be laws in place to protect that space and facilitate people's ability to participate.

Now, the good news is, here in Kenya, you now have a Constitution that creates the space for such participation. Alongside freedom of the press and freedom of assembly and the ability to organize politically, these are precious freedoms that have to be protected.

Because Kenya is a young democracy, there's always a concern that it might slip back and that space might narrow, despite what the Constitution says. And I just want to say, part of the reason why it's important for me to be here today is to send a message that we in the United States, at least, believe that civil society is important and we want to continue to affirm it and we want to listen and hear what it is that ordinary citizens, working together, have to say about their communities and about their lives.

And I—and if Kenya can continue to cultivate those habits of participation and citizenship and freedom, then the country is going to be better off and it's going to continue to make progress for all people and not just some. Okay?

So, with those opening remarks, what I want to do now is just open it up for conversation. And I have in my hand some names to call on. I may not get through all of them. I think you've been instructed to try to be relatively brief. [*Laughter*] In some cases, what I'll do is, I'll respond right away to the comments. In some cases, I may wait and respond at the end. But this is designed not so much as a town hall to ask me questions; it's more designed for you to give me a sense of the things that are important to you so that I can learn and—because, I think, this is going to be televised—so that the Kenya people as a whole can hear as well.

And the only thing I would ask is that everybody be respectful. And one of the rules of

good civil society, I believe, is that you're respectful of the people who disagree with you.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. And that's part of what makes civil society work. If you can have civil disagreements and you can listen to each other and not just shout, that's what creates an environment that leads to progress over the long term.

And the only other thing I'm going to do is, because it's warm, I'm going to take off my jacket. You're free to do so as well. This is pretty relaxed. But—[*laughter*].

Okay, so—and we've got a few topics where we've got some civil society organizations that are already working on some of these issues. And the—one of the topics that hasn't gotten a lot of attention during my trip, but I consider very important because it's part of Kenya's heritage, but it's also part of global heritage, and that is the issue of wildlife trafficking, where active citizens are really making a difference.

And I'm going to call on Tom Lalampaa of the Northern Rangelands Trust to tell us about what he's doing. Can you grab my water?

African Wildlife Conservation Efforts

Northern Rangelands Trust Chief Programs Officer Tom Lalampaa. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I work for Northern Rangelands Trust, NRT, an umbrella community organization currently supporting over 30 community-based conservancies.

We've had a lot of successes and challenges as well. But I just want to mention two high-level impacts. One is that we've been able to develop a model of a community conservancies that's unique, that has proven very successful, now widely accepted by the national Government and the county governments. And what the model does is that, first and foremost, is that it is grassroots-rooted. It's formed by the local communities: by the elders, the women, and the youth in the villages. And so these institutions help to anchor good governance, gender matters, awareness, microfinance for our youth and our women as well, and many, many more programs, including the life roots and getting water. It's become an entry point for the national Government and the county governments to deliver services to the local communities.

It's also structured in such a way that the political leaders take part in those institutions. So they are local community institutions that are registered with the Government. And it's just amazing, because they are creating a platform for dialogue, a platform for communities to decide where they want water, where they want help, where they want—what they want to do in matters of even—[*inaudible*].

The second high-level impact, Mr. President, is getting conservation to drive peace and conflict resolution in northern Kenya. In northern Kenya, peace and security is quite elusive for many reasons. One is because of the illegal firearms. Secondly, it's just because of the nature of the mistrust amongst our ethic communities. And thirdly, also because of the scarce natural resources: pasture, water for our cattle. And so we've managed to get the conservation to drive peace and conflict resolution in northern Kenya.

I was telling my friend Paula here that when people, communities, local communities are not in—don't have peace—[*inaudible*]—then there's no way the elephants will be in peace as well. [*Laughter*] And so I just want to say that all that has been made possible through the support of the U.S. Government and, in particular, through the USAID Kenya.

Mr. President, we have a number of challenges, but I'll put them in terms of a kind request to you. One, we'd appreciate the U.S. Government's support to protect and conserve the remaining African elephants. I'm saying "the remaining" because we have lost many. You can help us in three ways. First and foremost is to crush demand and market, Mr. President. Not even reducing it. If we can, let's crush it once and for all.

The Kenya Government, the civil society ourselves, and the local communities can only prevent poaching from the source, from being poached. But the markets and the demand, Mr. President, are far outside our borders. We are helpless. Please help us.

The other way you can help us to protect and conserve the remaining African elephants, Mr. President, is to get the U.S. Government be member of the African-led elephants protection initiative. Currently, nine African states have signed to it. And it would just bring enormous support and recognition if your Government can join it and also be a part of it.

Thirdly, in terms of helping us to preserve and protect—I mean, conserve and protect our elephants, the remaining, is, Mr. President, to help us deal with the mammoth ivory. The second request that I think would benefit all of us here, Mr. President, my request also is that if possible—we notice this is discussed all the time—but our humble request of the U.S. Government is to increase the international support for the international programs. And in mind, I'm talking about the USAID of this world and any other U.S. Government-related development agencies, because it's from that port that we are going to support conservation, we're going to improve livelihoods, we're going to support governance.

I always have a feeling that the USAID's offices, wherever they are in Africa—and in the world—they get massive applications, and they can only deal with much. Lastly, Mr. President, I must admit the fact that the Embassy's office, the USAID offices have been very engaged with us and extremely supportive.

Thank you so much, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you. Well, let me just say, first of all, Tom, that you're an eloquent spokesman for your cause and that was an excellent presentation. The second thing I have to say is, is that everybody is going to have to be briefer than Tom. [*Laughter*] Just because I want to make sure that I get as many comments as possible.

The third point is, with respect to conservation, you said the elephants that have been lost—20,000 elephants have been lost in recent years. And part of the reason why civil society has to be mobilized around conservation is that if people have a choice between—if they see a false choice between their own livelihoods and conserving animals, then the animals will lose. If they're organized so that they see that preservation and conservation enhances their lives, then we win, because they feel ownership, and they will participate.

And that's why the organizations that you're putting together are so important.

Now, we've got another person just on this issue before we move to another issue, Paula Kahumbu, right here. I could tell because she's got an arm band that says, "Hands Off Our Elephants." [*Laughter*] With the Wildlife Trust.

Ivory Trafficking Prevention Efforts/Girls' Education

WildlifeDirect Chief Executive Officer Paula Kahumbu. Thank you, Mr. President. First, on behalf of all the conservation community—and there are several people in the room—thank you so much for your initiatives to—on the African elephant, in particular.

More than 30,000 elephants——

The President. Thirty thousand.

Ms. Kahumbu. ——are being killed every year in Africa. That's one every 15 minutes. Your grandchildren may never see elephants. Now, I love elephants. I want the whole world to fall in love with elephants. And I started this campaign, "Hands Off Our Elephants," under my organization WildlifeDirect, with the First Lady, Margaret Kenyatta, to empower and mobilize Kenyans, Africans across the entire continent to save elephants. They are our heritage, they are our identity, and it's our duty. And it's not just Africans who benefit from this. The whole world benefits.

It's not been easy, but our work has really led to a change in the hearts and minds of Kenyans and also the laws. We've been at the center of judicial reforms in this country. Our work has led to the arrest of one of the most—what would I say—notorious suspected ivory kingpins, Feisal Mohamed Ali. For the first time in Kenya, an ivory trafficker is behind bars. And that's thanks to support from your Embassy, through Ambassador Godec, and many other organizations.

And while we're succeeding locally in Kenya—poaching is down—the problem across Africa is escalating, and the demand for ivory is actually exploding. We're dealing not with a

wildlife crisis alone. We're dealing with international wildlife crime. And that's why my organization goes after traffickers. We're dealing with people who are funding terrorism, and we're dealing with a crime that is fueled by corruption.

So we have two requests. The first is that you take this message back to the American people. We're often asked, how can we help? It's simple: Tell the American people, don't buy ivory. It's the simplest way to help. Secondly, we request that the U.S.A. takes a lead in pursuing international wildlife traffickers with the same vigor and rigor that you apply to money laundering and drugs crimes. And we believe that this can be done through strengthening your mutual, legal assistance role not just in the demand countries, but source countries and transit countries.

Because we know that the number of people involved in this crime is actually relatively small compared to those other crimes. And so we can crush this very quickly and end the war and save elephants for all of humanity.

Thank you.

The President. Thank you. Well, as you may have noted, yesterday one of our announcements was to be even stricter with respect to any ivory sales inside the United States. I mean, we really are cracking down on that.

And with respect to the international networks, you're absolutely right that there's a connection between corrupt officials getting paid, criminals being armed, and the ivory trade. So you have this linkage that should be of concern to all of us. And it's international in scope.

Most recently, we're in—the United States is involved in negotiations with the Asian countries, the Asia-Pacific region, something called the Trans-Pacific Partnership. One of the things we're trying to accomplish in the trade agreement is for many of these countries with still strong demand for ivory to start getting much more serious about the enforcement of their laws with—and have it embedded in the trade agreements that we initiate.

So, hopefully, we'll be able to influence not just what happens in the United States, but also in some of the areas where the demand is heaviest. Good. Another topic where we've seen some progress, and this is something that's close to my heart because I've got two daughters, and close to Michelle's heart—she's been involved internationally, trying to highlight the issue of girls' education with what we're calling the "Let Girls Learn" initiative that involves many of our international agencies—is the issue of girls' education. Obviously, I've made it a big emphasis of that in my speech here today.

So we've got a couple of people to talk about some of the work that's being done through civil society on this issue. And I'm going to start with Kennedy Odede of Shining Hope for Communities.

Girls' Education

Shining Hope for Communities Founder and Chief Executive Officer Kennedy Odede. Mr. President, it's my pleasure and privilege to meet someone like you who believes in grassroots change. You and I, we share one background that you did social work in Chicago and I'm doing it in Kibera slums where I grew up and also Mathare. I grew up in a slum whereby it's really hard to make it. There's no hope, no dream. Many young men end up being—become crime people. It's easy for them to be vulnerable to join even terrorism because they don't have a dream. There's no hope in them.

Mr. President, I was really having a hard time in my community, but we said, enough is enough, and, yes, we can! We came together with a soccer ball, and that became a movement that really circled around girls' education. We built the first school in the slum of Kibera called Kibera School for Girls and then started providing social services to men too. And that became, in a way, world-changing.

But my challenge is that, how do you take a grassroots thing like this into other—across Africa and by having more partners joining that? Thank you so much.

The President. The—well, organizations like yours, if you show that it works and you're creating a model of success, then it's more likely that it gets adopted in other places. People

learn from seeing something succeed that people might not have believed before could happen. And if they see that a school for girls in Kibera, with all the poverty there, is successful, that means it can succeed anywhere.

So we're very encouraged by the good work that you're doing.

Now, we also have with us Linet Momposhi. Linet is right there. Now, Linet is a student, and she's here from Pangani Girls form two. Linet.

Civil Society/Mentorship Programs/White House "My Brother's Keeper" Initiative/Terrorism

Pangani Girls High School student Linet Nenkoitoi Momposhi. Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me this chance. Let me speak with you a story of a friend of mine. At the age of 12, in standard six, she dropped out of school and underwent FGM, female genital mutilation. In my community, after undergoing such this—[*inaudible*]—the girl is said to be—she is ready for marriage. She was married to a man older than him, twice her age. And now at the age of 15, she has two children. She's not able to care take for them, for their education. She milks the cows in the morning and sells the milk so that she can have something to give to the children.

For me, I got an opportunity to be at a boarding school in Kakenya Center. I had all the chance to study, and I had all the time. I was not to milk the cows for my mom and prepare my siblings to go back to school. But now I'm studying in Pangani Girls, after I topped in my school and become the first girl in the center. And now I would like to be a cardiologist and study in Harvard University. And—[*applause*].

The President. That sounds good.

Ms. Momposhi. And also I would like to set an example to the girls in my community that a girl can really become a cardiologist. Thank you.

The President. That's wonderful. Linet, the—hold on, before—you were so inspiring. Give Linet the mike back. [*Laughter*] Linet, how old are you right now?

Ms. Momposhi. I'm 16 years old.

The President. You're 16 years old. So the—and how did you come to be able to go to the boarding school?

Ms. Momposhi. I was helped by Kakenya, who sponsors the Kakenya Center. And that's how I got to study in Kakenya Center. And I—my dream started working in that center where I had a dream to go to Maryhill of which I didn't to make Maryhill, but I made to Pangani Girls.

The President. So there was a center there, and by you coming into the center, then you started having bigger dreams about what you might be able to do?

Ms. Momposhi. Okay, I never used to have bigger dreams like now. Before I joined the center, I then never knew what I was going to do because I never had any hope in life.

The President. Yes. See—the—so, Linet, we—I'm sure you're going to be an excellent cardiologist. [*Laughter*] So we're very proud of you. But it just sends a message in terms of why civil society is so important. So many of our young people who have a lot of talent, but they just don't know what's possible. And sometimes, the most important thing is just to show them that this is what could happen in your life if you work hard. And when they have a vision about what can happen, then suddenly, they're motivated, the same way that Linet is motivated. And she starts having bigger ambitions about what's possible.

That's part of the reason why civil society organizations that create mentorship programs and programs for young people to interact in different professions and talk to people who have succeeded is so important. And in fact, in the United States I've set up something called "My Brother's Keeper," designed to target disadvantaged youth so that they are connected to mentorship programs and—very similar to some of the work that resulted in Linet being inspired.

In fact, I—we have young people who are mentors at the White House, and we connect them with all of our senior staff. And I have dinner with them and give them advice. And I don't know if they listen to the advice, but I think they do. [*Laughter*]

Linet, you're a very fine young woman. Congratulations. We're very proud of you.

So one of the issues, obviously, that's been of concern lately in Kenya is terrorism. This is an area where I'm working extensively with the Government. This is something that we're concerned about internationally. And obviously, given what happened in places like Westgate and Garissa, Kenya is a source of concern as well. But as I said at a press conference yesterday, one of the important lessons that we've learned is that you can't just fight terrorism through military and the police. You also have to change people's hearts and minds and give them a sense that they are included in the society and enlist them in assisting in fighting against terrorism.

And so I actually think that it's important to include civil society in the fight against terrorism. That's what we're doing in the United States. That's what we need to do here in Kenya as well. And so we've got a couple of organizations that are here that I want to call on just to talk about how the kind of work they're doing and what they're finding on the ground in dealing with this very important issue.

And I'm going to start with Hassan Ole Nado, who is with the SUPKEM. He's the deputy secretary general, which is a very important title. [*Laughter*] But here, please, go ahead. And describe for us what SUPKEM does. And is it regionally located? Is it national? Or is it more along the coasts? Tell me about what it's doing.

Counterterrorism Efforts

Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims Deputy Secretary General Hassan Ole Nado. Thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity and also for having time with civil society in Kenya. The Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims is an umbrella organization of Muslim organizations in the country, particularly mosque and Muslim committees all over the country. And also, we now have community-based organizations that are working at the community level, but they found time to advocate and to be part of the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims.

We are here, and we have been doing this work for the last 2 years because we are a little bit late in the journey, but we realize that it's very important for the community to be engaged. We have worked before by developing a countering violent extremism advocacy chapter. That calls for community leaderships, calls for government engagement and also brings other civil society organizations onboard so that we can be able to deal with this issue.

As you have already said, terrorism is not about military or the police or other things. It's more of community issues. So it has both security and social aspect of it. And really, I really thank you because of the White House summit, which I was privileged to attend with Hussein Khalid of Haki Africa. And in that—after that particular meeting, when we came back to Kenya we had found an opportunity to engage with government. Because before that White House summit, the engagement or relationship between civil society working on CVE was a little bit lower. But thanks to that conference, that really opened up the Government to engage with civil society.

Through that meeting, actually, we have been able, as civil society, to engage government in the development of a national countering violent extremism strategy. And I hope the Government will be learning the strategy very soon.

We know a number of organizations who have been involved in this part of community projects, like HAKI Africa and MUHURI, are currently facing some problems. And I hope through your engagement with the Government, you'd be able to raise concerns of these institutions which I know that the American Government cannot engage organizations that have relationships with the terrorist organizations. And I that is one of the things that we really think it is important to protect institutions or individuals who engaged in this particular work.

At the moment, we are also working with the returnees. In this country, we have young men and women who are somehow misadvised and found themselves in terrorist organizations. They found a way of getting back into their country, and there are not clear ways of engagement. I work with the Government of

Kenya because they gave amnesty to those who are willing to be given the amnesty. At the moment, we are really engaging them, and the Government is also opening up, because at the moment now, they are also creating what they call interagency coordination centers at the county level where all arms of government are talking together before they take actions against the suspected terrorists.

The Muslim community, the leadership, the scholars are also now onboard, and they are really working on the areas of counternarrative, because there are two narratives here. There is the ideological narrative, and there is the old narrative of marginalization and other aspects. As much as we talk about perceptions in the narrative of marginalization, they are real issues that we are calling the Government to address those issues.

One of the issues is the lack of identification documents for young people. I think it is very important that that should too should be addressed. We have a collapse of the education system in the northeast because of terror organizations. And I hope, as we struggle to find ways and answers of how to deal with this problem, it is important for USAID—which I know they've done quite a lot of work in this country—to consider getting into education much more by engaging communities so that communities can run community-based organization education systems in the northeast so that we are avoid getting terrorists of tomorrow. Because we have over 400,000 young children who are not going to school because everybody else has pulled from the region.

Maybe if I speak—I speak for the many days, but I really thank you for this opportunity and also for having time with the civil society organizations. *Asante sana.*

The President. Thank you. The—before you give up the mike, let me just ask you a question. The—I'm glad that because of the White House summit that we had on countering violent extremism, that there was a more constructive conversation that was taking place.

I think that point that you make is so important, which is reaching young people early. What I hear you saying is, is that one of the problems that exists in certain parts of the country now is because of fear, in some cases, and some of the existing structures not operating as well as they should, that you just have children who don't have access to educational resources and a structure, and then, that makes them more vulnerable to recruitment into an organization that can give them some sense of purpose or meaning, even if it ends up being a very negative one. Is that what I'm understanding?

Mr. Ole Nado. Yes, it's actually—that is what it is. Because as—after the unfortunate terror attacks of Mandera and later on the university in Garissa, those who were targeted—because those are targeting did—were doing it deliberately to create interreligious tension in the country. So we have those people, who are non-Muslims from the region, pulling out of the region because they feel it's no longer safe for them to remain in that region.

The President. Right.

Mr. Ole Nado. But by pulling out, the region has been exposed because it's not—it doesn't haven't adequate resources to address this gap that has emanated. So, to me, I think one of the things that we need to consider is, we need to build local organizations that can really break that gap at the community level, it's more sustainable because they're communities at a lower level.

The President. Okay. Thank you. That's very useful. Somebody else I want to hear from is Fauziya Abdi Ali, who's with Women in International Society.

Role of Women in Countering Violent Extremism

Sisters Without Borders Chair Fauziya Abdi Ali. Thank you.

The President. Fauziya.

Ms. Abdi. I must start by congratulating you. The speech was really, really good because it really advocated for issues of women, which is an area of passion. I'm not speaking as WIIS today, I'm actually speaking as Sisters Without Borders, because I chair a platform of very inspirational women who work every single day in the field of peace and security, in particular countering violent extremism.

So the women come from different parts of the country: from northern Kenya, from the coastal region, even here in Nairobi. And now I engage mentees all towards ensuring we have a peaceful society. We empower women from the household level to understand prevention, to understand early warning signs of radicalization of their kids, to look at prevention towards stigma that is associated with those mothers whose kids have actually joined violent extremism, or even their spouses. We also look at empowering them through support groups where they can have a space to engage with other likeminded people and even learn from each other. And we also ensure that this cross-border engagement between those within northern Kenya and those within the coastal region so that they don't feel alone in this whole concept of violent extremism.

What is normally important for me is, when it comes to issues of peace and security, engagement with women is still minimal, and we're still playing catch-up. When we are pushing for two-thirds, even within our own parliamentary systems, we're not looking at what these two-thirds will be doing. And for us, we are pushing towards them having some concrete things that they will talk about within Parliament. And in particular is the issue of education. Because for the women in northern Kenya, their children are actually not going to school; they're not getting quality education. And as Hassan has said, this ends up becoming a society that has young people who are not well educated and are more susceptible to violent extremism.

Secondly, it's the issue of the economy. In places such as the coastal region, this has affected the economy. And this trickles down to the household level, and it affects the woman's own economy within that structure. So how can we have even these conversations going higher? And we try and link this to the national level.

We also ensure that these discussions around policy on prevention has a gender lens. Because the reasons why boys join and the reason why girls join is very different. But when we are searching for solutions in policy, we try and group them together. So sometimes, even when we are looking at issues of amnesty, we are not really opening up that space to understand if we are going to put up a rehabilitation center, how do we make it different from when engaging with a boy and when engaging with a girl. So that is very critical for us.

One key thing I would love to put across is, you started the first—the conversation—the White House conference in February, and it brought a lot more conversation here through the regional conference we had. And I wanted to elevate that. In terms of ensuring it's more sustainable so that it pushes away from just discussion is to push for a hub that can be placed in Africa. The hub we have is actually in the U.A.E., the United Arab Emirates. This is the Hedayah Center, which is useful for research and ensuring there's more conversation around how private sector gets involved, how civil society and governments can come together.

But we don't have such hubs in Africa. So, in most cases, when you hear about capacity-building of CVE, we have to go outside Africa to get this capacity-building. So why not actually start thinking about either expanding the global center to have a hub in Kenya or somewhere in Africa for easy access for even the grassroot initiatives and civil society to also be engaged?

Thank you.

The President. Good. Thank you. That was an excellent presentation. Thank you.

And I will very much take your remarks under advisement in terms of the possibilities of setting up a hub. I think the idea of women being actively engaged in countering violent extremism is absolutely critical. Mothers tend to be more sensible. [*Laughter*] And—I'm just telling the truth. [*Laughter*] And obviously, the younger we're reaching children and giving them the sense that violence is not the right path, and that's being reinforced by their primary caregiver, which typically is the mother, and the idea of peer-to-peer support, but also some peer pressure in terms of making sure that mothers are involved in steering their children in the right way, I think that's a wonderful

model. Very exciting. The—I just learned something there.

So I've got a little bit more time. What I'd like to do now is, I'm just going to call on some people. But I'm not going to be able to call on anybody—everybody, so I just want to say in advance. But I'm going to start with this young lady right there, in the sweater. And please introduce yourself.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. My name is—[*inaudible*]. I am the CEO for Kamak Girls Initiative. Kamak Girls came about because of a problem. I came from a family that had 45 children; out of it, 35 who are living. Out of the 35, 20 were girls, 15 were boys. And out of the 20 girls, only 10, 11 went to school, 4 of them up to secondary, and 1 now up to the Ph.D. level. So my father was really for education. He really tried his best. But when he passed away in 2004, I realized as a bigger girl, number three, that I had work to do: to follow these girls who dropped out of school and see that they can live a more meaningful life towards education, health, and economic development.

So I gathered the four girls who are with me, and we started visiting them and find out how they are living. Right now I've managed with my three sisters to take two to the university. One has completed and has gotten a job. One is in the third form. Two to diploma level; one of them we pushed, and we opened at a city school where she was married. And the other one went to forest school. And to point, one of them where she was staying—[*inaudible*]—she reached a class 8, and she has opened an inner-city school.

The President. Excellent.

Q. Our next step is to evaluate—when we evaluate, we get these girls—get girls of their range so that they can see what these girls have done and also help the girls in the particular area.

The President. Okay.

Q. Yes. And apart from that, I'm a nurse. [*Laughter*] I've worked for 34 years, but I've not gone very far because I started building our children from the—[*inaudible*]—and I started working and continue to—[*inaudible*]—I have three children. They have not gone very far because I'm taking care of these people.

So my request is that this group of mine can move further so that whenever these girls are married, I can—not only those girls of ours, but also the girls in that area can also see that they can do it. Thank you so much.

The President. Okay. Well, thank you for your good efforts.

So this young lady right there. Get a mike real quick. And I'd ask everybody to try to be as brief as possible so I can get as many additional questions as possible.

Kenya's Political System/Federal System of Government in the U.S./Kenya-U.S. Relations/President Obama's Meeting With Kenyan Opposition Leaders/U.S. Foreign Policy

Q. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I am here on behalf of the Devolution Forum. That's a civil society coalition that was set up early last year because we were very concerned about challenges to the implementation of devolution in Kenya. And so I'll speak to just, very briefly, four points. I have a more comprehensive memorandum.

But one is, we're very concerned about the structure development assistance on devolution. A lot of it is being channeled through the national Government to go to the county governments, and this is contrary to the Constitution which recognizes the two levels of government as having shared sovereignty.

Now, this is a ploy by the Government to keep power centralized. It's really a method of controlling the governance structure. So we find that even with the U.S., some of your programs are being channeled in this way, through the national Government, for the county government. And we find that this is bad for devolution. We find also the World Bank very much is channeling—they are funding in this direction.

The other thing that I'd like to address is to do with the war on terror. We've noted that this an intergovernmental aspect to the war on terror. And because the security reforms have not been implemented as was—to the pace that was supposed to be, we find that these in-

tergovernmental institutions, such as the county policing authorities, the community policing, ideologically and even structurally have not been set up. Ideologically, we find that they are being taken as more information-gathering rather than community policing where communities get actively involved in their community policing. So we are very concerned that as the U.S. assists the Kenyan Government, are you going to look at the ideological foundations of the structures that will engage citizens and the country governments in the security process? Because if we don't do that, then we'll undermine the war on terror and security.

I'll pick one more because I'm——

The President. Because you're running out of time.

Q. I'm out of time. [*Laughter*] There's a trend in Africa where the civic space is being closed. And we're looking at countries like Rwanda, Ethiopia. We're looking at our own country. And we're wondering, what's the response of the U.S. Government? We heard your excellent remarks and sentiments, but of course, you are working with a Government that has demonstrated an intent to close the civic space. So what's your approach going to be as you consolidate your work with the Kenyan Government in terms of supporting civil society? We're finding even support for civil society is not as rigorous as it should have been. Thank you.

The President. Okay. The—well, those are all excellent remarks. Let me just broadly—you can give them to somebody—let me just broadly talk about devolution, and then we'll talk about how we are interacting with the national Government on civil society issues.

With respect to devolution, Kenya now has a Constitution, and it has laid out how devolution is supposed to proceed. That will be subject to interpretation and legal challenges and political arguments. That's probably not an issue that the United States will be weighing in on deeply. And the reason I say that is because we have a system of government with a national—or a Federal Government and then State governments and then local governments. And the relationship between the Federal Government and the States, the relationship between Federal law and local laws is extremely complicated and has been the source of constant democratic debate, argument, challenges, court cases. And that's been going on for 250 years now. [*Laughter*] I mean, that was part of the original issue in the formation of the United States of America: how much power remained with the States, how much power went to the Federal Government.

So the challenge that we would have as an international—or as an outside party as the United States of America, is that how that plays itself out within Kenya is ultimately up to the Kenyan people. Because there are arguments actually on both sides when it comes to national versus State power. In the United States, for example, those who wanted to maintain racial segregation consistently used the argument that States have the right to do what they want and the Federal Government doesn't have the authority to enforce civil rights laws that are discriminating against minorities at the State level.

And I actually think, in that situation, the national Government needed to say to States that had segregation laws, you have stop. And national law and the rights of individuals that are in the Bill of Rights are superior to whatever challenges—or whatever claims are being made for States' rights.

Now, on the other hand, there are times where the national Government is involving itself in States unnecessarily and imposing views that may not be properly adapted to the local region.

So I guess what I'm saying is, is that that's an issue that's—it would be very difficult for us as outsiders to try to figure out. What we can do is to say, consistent with democracy, you have a Constitution; you should abide by what's in your Constitution. And you can make your own decisions about the systems that you want to arrange and the balance between Federal and State power or local power or counties. And as long as it's proceeding in a legal process consistent with the Constitution, we're okay with that.

So I just want you—to be honest, that's not probably an issue where I'm going to be asking the Ambassador of the United States to get deeply involved in—[*laughter*]—because it's just too complicated. Every country is going to be different in terms of finding that balance.

Now, the issue of civil society is different, because we do believe that if you have a—laws that restrict people's ability to organize and speak out peacefully and participate in their Government and petition their Government—if those become too restrictive, then that, in any society, contradicts the basic premise of democracy.

And I recognize that there have been some concerns about some of the laws that have either been proposed or are being interpreted in ways that appear to restrict the legality of certain activities by certain groups. Rather than to say specifically what we're for and against—because frankly, I don't know all the details—what I will say is this: We will look suspiciously on laws that say certain peaceful groups can't operate just because they might be critical of the Government, for example. I mean, our bias as a country and in our foreign policy is to say that if a group is peacefully organizing and advocating for issues, that they should be able to do so without excessive Government interference. Now, if the groups are violent, then that's a different issue.

But you heard me in my press conference yesterday: I don't want counterterrorism to be used as an excuse then to crush legitimate dissent. And we will guard against that as well.

So we have every intention to work on a whole range of common interests with the Kenyan Government. There are areas where we have a complete agreement, and we will work through the Kenyan Government in order to accomplish those common goals. We want to be helpful and supportive of the national agenda, but we'll also be working with NGOs and local organizations at the local level. Many of the organizations that are here we have been supporting. And what we'll do is, we'll make sure that in all of our interactions and engagements with the Government, when we see an organization, for example, that we have determined is, in fact, legitimate and is peaceful, that it is in some ways being suppressed, we will speak out, and we'll be very clear about it. So we're going to be engaged, we're going to be involved.

But as I was telling—I met with some of the opposition leaders very briefly, those who are not in government—after the speech. And I told them, you have a legally elected Government, and we're going to work with that Government, but we're also always going to be listening to all elements of Kenyan society. It was funny, though, the—one of the opposition leaders—I won't mention who—was saying, you know, we really need you to press the Kenyan Government on some issues. And I had to say to him, I said, I remember when you were in government—[*laughter*]—you kept on saying, why is—are you trying to interfere with Kenya's business; you should mind your own business. [*Laughter*]

So everybody wants the United States to be very involved when they're not in power. And when they're in power, they want the United States to mind their own business.

I think the way that we are going to operate is just to continue to be honest and to promote the kinds of policies and interests that we believe in. But ultimately—and this is probably a good way to close—ultimately, I just want to remind everybody that Kenya's prosperity, its freedom, its opportunity, the strength of its democracy is going to depend on Kenyans. It's not going to depend on somebody else.

There was a time, postcolonial, cold war, when the big major powers were constantly interfering and determining what was happening in other countries. And frankly, the United States sometimes was involved in trying to decide who should be in charge of countries. But that, honestly, has changed. Our policy is to respect the sovereignty of nations and to recognize that it's ultimately up to the people of those countries to determine who leads them and their form of government. But we are not going to apologize for believing in certain values and ideals. And I may interact with a government, out of necessity, where we have common interests. But if there are areas where I

disagree, I will also be very blunt in my disagreement. And that's true whether it's Russia or China or some of our European friends or a great friend like Kenya.

The good news is that, over all, the United States and Kenya have so much in common, so much shared history, such strong people-to-people ties, that the disagreements we have, regardless of who's in power, tend to be far fewer than all the areas where we have work to do together.

But I'm very encouraged to see that we've got such a strong civil society that's going to help move Kenya forward and also help create a stronger relationship between the United States and Kenya for years to come.

So thank you for being here. This was a great conversation. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:57 p.m. at the Young African Leaders Initiative Regional Leadership Center. In his remarks, he referred to Olive Mugenda, vice chancellor, Kenyatta University; and U.S. Ambassador to Kenya Robert F. Godec. A participant referred to Hussein Khalid, executive director, HAKI Africa.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
July 27, 2015

Prime Minister Hailemariam. Members of the press, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to once again welcome His Excellency, the President of the United States of America, to Ethiopia. We are honored to receive a sitting U.S. President for the first time in the history of our century-long diplomatic relations. But again, we believe it's fitting and appropriate in the light of the fact that Ethiopia is the cradle of mankind, the beacon light for African independence, and an inspiration for all the Black people's struggles and the political capital of Africa.

Ethiopia is the birthplace of coffee—[*laughter*]—and with so many firsts to its name, and as such, a first and historic visit by the first U.S. President of African origin, I believe it's a well-deserved one. His visit comes at a time when both Africa and Ethiopia are registering impressive growth, making important strides. For Ethiopia's economy has registered double-digits growth for the last 12 years, uninterruptedly.

His visit also comes at a time when we're working hard in improving governance and fighting insecurity, conflicts, and terrorism. His visit could not have come at a better time, as the leader of the most powerful nation on Earth, diplomatically, economically, and more importantly, in science and technology and education—the very things Africa and Ethiopia need in abundance if they are to sustain their growth—President Obama's visit represents a new height in our bilateral relations.

This morning we have had extensive bilateral discussions with President Obama on a range of topics. We have discussed on ways of further deepening our bilateral relations and our cooperation on a number of issues. Among the areas we have discussed, we talked at length about the U.S. support in helping expand trade and investment in Ethiopia.

As you know, the U.S. is Ethiopia's strategic partner in many fields. And the steady of flow of quality investment from the United States, as much as we crave it, though the recent beginning is so encouraging, has often been in a short supply. We have discussed, among other things, how to encourage U.S. investors to come to Ethiopia in large numbers, where there are numerous competitive and comparative advantages they can benefit from.

We have discussed how best we can take advantage of President Obama's signature Power Africa initiative, which is, in our case, has already seen significant progress made with a thousand-megawatts geothermal deal—contract to be signed this afternoon.

We have also discussed ways of scaling up the successful projects and that President Obama launched 4 years ago in his flagship

Alliance for Food Security program and launching of similar initiatives.

We have also discussed and reached an understanding on coordinating our efforts in the global effort to fight climate change and to work together for the success of the COP 21st negotiations in Paris. Likewise, we have exchanged ideas on ways the U.S. can champion the Addis Ababa action agenda during the negotiations of the sustainable development goals in New York next September. We have also agreed to work on global health epidemics.

We have raised a number of issues on how the U.S. can support the strengthening of Ethiopia's democratization process. My Government has expressed its commitment to deepen the democratic process already underway in the country and work towards respect of human rights and improving governance.

We have reiterated once again that our commitment to democracy is real, not skin deep. We have both noted that we need to step up efforts to strengthen our institutions and build our capacity in various areas. We believe that U.S. support in this regard as age-old democracy will contribute to ensuring that our system becomes robust. We have agreed to continue our engagement despite minor differences here and there with regard mainly to the speed with which our democratization process is moving.

Finally, we have discussed a range of issues related to cooperation on security and peacebuilding in the region and on the pivotal role the U.S. can and does play. We have agreed to work closely on South Sudan to bring lasting peace to the conflict-ridden country. We have both agreed to work together in building peace in Somalia by helping create state institutions and by strengthening the Somali security forces in their quest to be in charge of the peace of their own country.

We have agreed to intensify the campaign against terrorism in the region, and we both noted with satisfaction the progress AMISOM forces and Somali National Army are making, with the support of the U.S. and other partners, in their fight against al-Shabaab.

We have agreed to deepen our intelligence cooperation both bilaterally as well as regionally. We have both noted and underscored that this cooperation is essential to curb the menace posed by terrorism. The terrorist attack that was launched in Mogadishu yesterday is a stark reminder that we need to work even more in this respect.

In conclusion, we have agreed to continue working together for better results in all aspects of our cooperation.

Mr. President, I now call upon you to give your remarks.

President Obama. Well, thank you, Mr. Prime Minister. Good afternoon. *Dehna walach-hu.* [*Laughter*] Prime Minister Hailemariam, we appreciate your kind words and for the welcome that you've extended to our delegation.

We've had very productive meetings here today. And after our bilateral, I had a chance to see the famous lions that live on the grounds. I'm considering getting some for the White House. [*Laughter*] Although, I'll have to make sure that my dogs are safe. [*Laughter*]

To the people of Ethiopia, thank you for the warmth and enthusiasm of your welcome and the spirit of friendship that you've shown me since I've been in Addis. I am proud to be the first U.S. President to visit Ethiopia and, tomorrow, the first U.S. President to address the African Union. So my visit reflects the importance the United States places on our relationship with Ethiopia and all the nations and peoples of Africa.

As you noted, Ethiopia and the United States share a long friendship. Our people have worked together, traded with each other, and stood alongside one another for more than 100 years. The United States is strengthened by the contributions of Ethiopian Americans every day, and that's particularly true in our Nation's capital, Washington, DC, which has the largest Ethiopian community outside of Ethiopia and—or at least outside of Africa.

And we welcome Ethiopian students to study in the United States. Through our Young African Leaders Initiative, we are helping to empower dynamic young Ethiopians with the tools that they need to make a difference in

their communities. Ethiopia also hosts one of the largest Peace Corps programs in the world and has welcomed thousands of young Americans over the years.

So the connections between our peoples are both deep and enduring. And today the Prime Minister and I spoke about how we can strengthen the cooperation between our nations.

First, we're going to continue working together to advance Ethiopia's economic progress. Ethiopia has one of the fastest growing economies in the world and one of the largest economies in Africa. And we want to sustain that momentum, because a growing and inclusive economy in Ethiopia means more opportunities for the Ethiopian people and more trade and investment between our nations, which, in turn, helps to create American jobs.

With the renewal of the African Growth and Opportunity Act, we'll work to further open American markets to Ethiopian products and help expand private sector investment in Ethiopia. Through our Power Africa initiative, we're working to unlock Ethiopia's potential for geothermal energy with the nation's first private sector energy agreement. And this will help the Government meet its ambitious goal of significantly increasing access to electricity across Ethiopia and help open the market to developing Ethiopia's other vast renewable energy sources.

Second, we're stepping up our cooperation on development, where Ethiopia has proven itself a global leader. To many people around the world, their image of Ethiopia remains stuck in the past, remembering drought and famine. But in the past 15 years, Ethiopia has lifted millions of people out of poverty. We're working closely together to improve food security, to help farmers plant drought-resistant and higher yield crops. We're building resilience to climate change. Fewer people are suffering needlessly from preventable diseases like malaria. More children are getting an education. Of course, there are still too many people, particularly in the rural areas, living in deprivation, so we have to keep moving on the progress that's been made.

Prime Minister Hailemariam has demonstrated his commitment to eliminating extreme poverty. Ethiopia recently hosted the International Conference on Financing for Development, which secured a global consensus about how the nations of the world will deliver on our promises, especially to those most in need. Your Prime Minister played a vital role in forging that consensus, and Ethiopia is now helping to shape a new set of sustainable development goals for the world.

Third, our security cooperation is pushing back against violent extremism. Ethiopia faces serious threats, and its contribution to the African Union mission in Somalia have reduced areas under al-Shabaab control. But, as the Prime Minister noted, yesterday's bombing in Mogadishu reminds us that terrorist groups like al-Shabaab offer nothing but death and destruction and have to be stopped. We've got more work to do. This past week, Ethiopian troops have helped retake two major al-Shabaab strongholds. We have to now keep the pressure on.

Ethiopia is a major contributor as well to U.N. peacekeeping efforts; it contributes more troops than any other country in Africa. And we're working together to improve the ability of Ethiopian peacekeepers to respond rapidly to emerging crises, before they spiral into widespread violence.

Ethiopia has also been a key partner as we seek to resolve the ongoing crisis in South Sudan. Later today the Prime Minister and I will meet with leaders from across the region to discuss ways we can encourage the Government and opposition in South Sudan to end the violence and move toward a peace agreement. I want to thank Ethiopia for the sanctuary it provides hundreds of thousands of refugees who have fled South Sudan and conflicts throughout the region.

And finally, I would note that everything I've mentioned—sustained and inclusive growth, development, security gains—also depends on good governance. We had a frank discussion. In a global economy that's increasingly driven by technology and the Internet, continued growth in Ethiopia depends on the

free flow of information and open exchanges of ideas. I believe that when all voices are being heard, when people know that they're included in the political process, that makes a country stronger and more successful and more innovative. So we discussed steps that Ethiopia can take to show progress on promoting good governance, protecting human rights, fundamental freedoms, and strengthening democracy. And this is an area where we intend to deepen our conversations and consultation, because we strongly believe in Ethiopia's promise and its people.

Ethiopia is a strong partner with the United States and a leader on so many vital issues in the region. And it has the opportunity now to extend its leadership in ways that benefit all of Ethiopia's people and that sets a positive example for the region. It's hard work, but my message today to the people of Ethiopia is that, as you take steps moving your country forward, the United States will be standing by you the entire way.

So, Prime Minister, thank you for your hospitality and for the important work that our nations do together. *Ameseginalehu.* [*Laughter*]

Prime Minister Hailemariam. Ameseginalehu. [*Laughter*]

Moderator. Now we'll have some time for questions. Okay, first from Ethiopian local journalists.

Ethiopia-U.S. Counterterrorism Cooperation/President Obama's African Aid Policies

Q. Thank you very much, Mr. President and Mr. Prime Minister. My name is—[*inaudible*]. I am from Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation. Mr. President, you mentioned earlier that combating terrorism is one of the areas in which Ethiopia and the U.S. is—are partnering. However, organizations based in the U.S. and Eritrea are also acting—[*inaudible*]—in Ethiopia's antiterrorism efforts. How will your Government assist Ethiopia in this regard?

And secondly, in regards to trade and investment cooperation, how committed is your Government to transform the aid-based Ethiopia-U.S. relations to a mutually beneficial trade and investment cooperation? Thank you very much.

President Obama. Good. Well, on the first issue, this was part of our conversation both with respect to security, but also with respect to good governance and human rights issues. Our policy is that we oppose terrorism wherever it may occur. And we are opposed to any group that is promoting the violent overthrow of a government, including the Government of Ethiopia, that has been democratically elected.

I also shared with the Prime Minister our interest in deepening intelligence cooperation. And we've had some fruitful discussions about ending the flow of foreign financing for terrorism. Our cooperation regionally is excellent. I know that there are certain groups that have been active in Ethiopia that, from the Ethiopian Government's perspective, pose a significant threat. Our intelligence indicates that while they may oppose the Government, they have not tipped into terrorism. And we have some very clear standards in terms of how we evaluate that.

But what I indicated to the Prime Minister is, is that in our consultations and deepening intelligence cooperation, we will look and see what evidence we have, where there are real problems, and where we see genuine terrorist activity. That's something that we are going to want to cooperate with and stop.

So a lot of this has to do with how we define a particular group's activities. If they are just talking about issues and are in opposition and are operating as political organizations, we tend to be protective of them even if we don't agree with them. That's true in the United States; that's true everywhere. And we think that's part of what's necessary for a democracy. If they tip into activities that are violent and are undermining a properly constituted government, then we have a concern. And so this will be a matter of facts—what are the facts with respect to this issue—in determining how we can work together.

On shifting development models, part of what I've been preaching ever since I came into office and what we've been putting into practice as I travel across the continent of Afri-

ca, but this is also true in Latin America, it's true in Asia: In this modern world, it is not enough just to provide aid. Sometimes, aid is critical. I mean, we're very proud of the work that we've done to provide health aid that has saved millions of lives with respect to HIV/AIDS. We are very proud of our ability to mobilize humanitarian assistance when there's a drought and the potential for starvation. Those are still necessary. But what we also believe is that we are your best partners and your best friends when we are building capacity.

So, instead of just giving a fish, we teach you how to fish. And whether it's the work we're doing in agriculture or on energy, our goal is not to simply provide something and then we go away and then later on we need to give you something more. Our goal is to help you advance your development agenda so that it's Ethiopian businesses and Ethiopian technical experts and Ethiopian scientists and Ethiopian agricultural workers who are continually building capacity and increasing development inside the country.

And on that, we can be a very effective partner. And that, then, allows us also to trade and engage the private sector in this process.

So, on Power Africa, for example, we are providing billions of dollars from the U.S. Government, and we're leveraging the Swedish Government and World Bank to create a fund that helps to facilitate transactions. But what we're also doing is, is working with the Ethiopian Government to leverage that money so that the private sector says, "We'd like to invest in Ethiopia as well," and helping advise the Ethiopian Energy Ministry and technical experts on what may be the best models for reaching rural areas, for example, which may not always involve big power plants, but might involve off-grid, smaller models of development that are sustainable and are not dependent on constant financial flows from the West, but instead build up local capacity and are best suited for the particular environment where electricity is needed.

So that, I think, is going to be true in health, energy, agriculture. The more that Ethiopians are able to grow rapidly on their own, then our relationship becomes one of mutual interest, mutual respect. And Ethiopia then becomes a leader, and it can then help other countries that are not as advanced on the development scales. And then, we can partner with you to help a Somalia as it's rebuilding after decades of failed governance. Okay?

White House Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest. Our next question will come from Kevin Corke with Fox News.

Human Rights/Al-Shabaab Terrorist Organization/Africa-U.S. Counterterrorism Cooperation

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I'd like to ask you about balance. And you often speak about the importance of rewarding good governance, and so I'm wondering how do you balance your obvious concerns about human rights here in Ethiopia with a desire for increased economic partnership and strengthening regional security cooperation? And if I could follow up: Have you ruled out, or would you consider, increased military involvement by the United States in East Africa to battle al-Shabaab? And if so, what lessons could be learned from the battle against ISIS, for example, that might be relevant here?

And, Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for your great hospitality in your beautiful country. I'd like to ask you about perception. For all the incredible things that are happening here in Ethiopia—a strengthening economy, a great investment right now in renewable energy infrastructure—there is still a perception, sir, that human rights abuses are tolerated here, and that could really be affecting international investment in your economy. Are you concerned about that? If so, how concerned, and what might you be doing, sir, to change that perception? Thank you.

President Obama. Well, as I said in our—my opening remarks, this was a significant topic of conversation. We are very mindful of Ethiopia's history, the hardships that this country has gone through. It has been relatively recently in which the Constitution that was formed and the elections put forward a democratically elected government. And as I indicated when I was in Kenya, there is still more work to do,

and I think the Prime Minister is the first to acknowledge that there's more work to do.

The way we think about these issues is, we want to engage with governments on areas of mutual concern and interest, the same way, by the way, that we deal with China and deal with a range of other countries where the democratic practices or issues around freedom of the press and assembly are not ones that align with how we are thinking about it, but we continually bring it up, and we indicate that this is part of our core interest and concern in our foreign policy. That's true here as well.

My observation to the Prime Minister has been that the governing party has significant breadth and popularity. And as a consequence, making sure to open additional space for journalists, for media, for opposition voices, will strengthen rather than inhibit the agenda that the Prime Minister and the ruling party has put forward.

And I think our goal here is to make sure that we are a constructive partner, recognizing that Ethiopia has its own culture and it's not going to be identical to what we do, but there are certain principles that we think have to be upheld.

The one thing that I've tried to be consistent on, though, is to make sure that we don't operate with big countries in one fashion and small countries in another. Nobody questions our need to engage with large countries that—where we may have differences on these issues. That's true with Africa as well. We don't improve cooperation and advance the very interests that you talk about by staying away. So we have to be in a conversation. And I think Prime Minister will indicate that I don't bite my tongue too much when it comes to these issues, but I do so from a position of respect and regard for the Ethiopian people and recognizing their history and the challenges that they continue to face.

With respect to the—our military assistance, keep in mind that we have been active in the fight against al-Shabaab for a long time now. And we've been partnering with Ethiopia and Kenya and Uganda and the African Union and AMISOM. And that's something that I think those other countries would agree has been a very effective partnership. Part of the reason that we've seen the shrinkage of al-Shabaab's activities in East Africa is because we have our military teams in consultation with regional forces and local forces, and there are certain capacities that we have that some of these militaries may not, and I think there's been complementarity in the work that we've done together.

So we don't need to send our own Marines, for example, in to do the fighting. The Ethiopians are tough fighters. [*Laughter*] And the Kenyans and Ugandans have been serious about putting troops on the ground, at significant sacrifice, because they recognize the importance of stabilizing the region.

That's why, in the past, I've said, for example, that the work that we're doing in Somalia is a model. Some in the press have noted that al-Shabaab is still here, and they say, well, how can that be a model if you still have bombs going on? The point that I was making at that time is not that defeating any of these terrorist networks is easy or that the problems in Somalia are completely solved. The point I was making was that a model in which we are partnering with other countries and they are providing outstanding troops on the ground—we're working with, in this case, the Somali Government, which is still very much in its infancy, to develop its national security capacity—so that we're doing things that we can do uniquely, but does not require us putting boots on the ground, that's the model that we're talking about.

And Ethiopia is an outstanding partner in that process. They have one of the most effective militaries on the continent. And as I noted in my earlier remarks, they are also one of the biggest contributors to peacekeeping. And so they're averting a lot of bloodshed and a lot of conflict because of the effectiveness of their military, and we want to make sure that we're supporting that. Okay?

Prime Minister Hailemariam. Yes, we fully understand that the perception and the reality does not, in many cases, match as far as Ethiopia is concerned. Therefore, we want to work

on this issue; it's our concern. And—but something has to be understood: that this is a fledgling democracy and we are coming out of centuries of undemocratic practices and culture in this country. And it's not easy within a few decades—in our case, only two decades of democratization—that we can get rid of all this attitudinal problems and some challenges we face. But we feel that we are on the right track, and there is a constitutional democracy which we all are obliged to observe for the sake of our own people and prosperity.

So I think this is a way that we have to work on. That's why I said in my speech that we have to learn the best practices of United States and age-old democracies, because this is a process of learning and doing, and I think we fully understand that. And of course, we also know our limitations, and we have to work on our limitations to make ultimately to the betterment of our own people. So I think that is a concern that we have to work on.

Moderator. Second question. Ethiopia.

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa/South Sudan

Q. Thank you. I'm—[*inaudible*]—from EBC Radio 104.7, and my question for you, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn is, what do you expect from the United States and the rest of the international community in terms of supporting the peace and security efforts in the Horn of Africa, as well as, how successful was your bilateral discussion with President Obama, specifically in regards to economics ties?

And, President Obama, my question for you is, what are your thoughts specifically on the IGAD-Plus peacekeeping efforts in South Sudan?

Prime Minister Hailemariam. As far as the economic cooperation is concerned, I mentioned that Ethiopia is one of the vibrant economies, which is rising. And we need—you know, we don't want to put all our eggs in one basket. We need a comprehensive, quality investment from every corner of the globe. And specifically, at this time, we agreed that the President is going to support us, his Government is going to support us in bringing quality investment to Ethiopia.

We have a longstanding relations, diplomatic relations, but the investment flow doesn't match that long history of cooperation between Ethiopia and United States. So I think there is a room. Recently, we have a number of renowned companies from United States showing up to invest in my country. But we also understand that we have to improve our investment climate and environment; where there are stifling issues here and there, bureaucratic bottlenecks, that has to be addressed. And we are on top of them, and we can address them. I think by doing so, we can attract more foreign direct investment from the United States.

As far as the security cooperation in concerned, I think we believe that Africans should take our own responsibility by our own hand. We need support from United States, but it doesn't mean that United States is going to replace us in taking our own agenda in Africa.

That's why Ethiopia is contributing peacekeeping force, a number which the President has mentioned. And we're also working on increasing the capability of our troops in peacekeeping. But the most important thing is, we have to engage the people of Africa and their respective countries to make peace and the governance system that helps the people to engage.

So I think we are on the right track. And we can make changes in Somalia and, I am hopeful, also in South Sudan. And I think, in many cases, this shouldn't mar the picture of Africa where, in large, Africa is now rising, and Africa is showing—becoming next frontier for economic development and cooperation. So I think we are on the right track in this cooperation.

President Obama. IGAD has been a vital partner to the international community in leading discussions between Mr. Kiir, Mr. Machar, Government, opposition figures in South Sudan. Unfortunately, the situation continues to deteriorate. That's not because IGAD has not tried hard enough. I know that between Prime Minister Hailemariam and the other partners in IGAD, there has been a lot of

time and a lot of effort to push the parties together.

Nevertheless, the situation is deteriorating. The humanitarian situation is worsening. The possibilities of renewed conflict in a region that has been torn by conflict for so long and has resulted in so many deaths is something that requires urgent attention from all of us, including the international community.

That's why, after this press conference, we'll be consulting with the leaders from the other countries who have been involved in IGAD to see how the United States, IGAD, and the international community can work to bring a peace agreement and a structure to fruition sometime in the next several weeks. We don't have a lot of time to wait. The conditions on the ground are getting much, much worse. And part of my interest in calling together this meeting was to find out how we can help.

Up until this point, it's been very useful to have the African countries take the lead. As Prime Minister Hailemariam stated, the more that Africans are solving African problems, the better off we're going to be. But we also think that we can be a mechanism for additional leverage on the parties, who, up until this point, have proven very stubborn and have not yet risen to the point where they are looking out for the interests of their nation as opposed to their particular self-interests. And that transition has to take place, and it has to take place now. Okay?

Press Secretary Earnest. The final question will come from Darlene Superville with the Associated Press.

South Sudan/Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action To Prevent Iran From Obtaining a Nuclear Weapon/2016 Presidential Election/U.S. Political Culture

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I wanted to follow up on the Sudan question. As you go into this meeting that you just mentioned, are you expecting any breakthroughs that will get both sides to agree to a peace deal by the August 17 deadline? And if there is no agreement, what further steps would you be willing to take to bring that about?

And if I could ask about Iran. Would you kindly bring us up to date on the administration's lobbying of Congress to get approval for the deal? And would you include your reaction to Republican Presidential candidate Mike Huckabee saying that the deal is the equivalent of marching the Israelis toward "the door of the oven"?

Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for your hospitality. Would you also add your thoughts on the situation in Sudan and how to bring peace over there? The second question I have for you is, the Committee To Protect Journalists ranks your country as the second worst jailer of journalists in Africa. Just before President Obama arrived here, some journalists were released. Many more are still being detained. Would you explain what issues or objections you have to a free press? Thank you.

President Obama. On South Sudan, the goal here is to make sure that the United States and IGAD are aligned on a strategy going into this endgame on peace talks. So my hope is that, as a result of these consultations, that we agree on how urgent it is and what each of us have to do to actually bring a deal about.

I don't want to prejudge what I'll hear from the President of Uganda, for example, until I actually hear from him. But the good news is that all of us recognize that something has got to move, because IGAD has now been involved with consultations for these—with these individuals for a very, very long time, and our Special Envoys that have been involved in this for years now have concluded that now is the time for a breakthrough. And if we don't see a breakthrough by August 17, then we're going to have to consider what other tools we have to apply greater pressure on the parties.

And that's something, I think, the parties will certainly hear from us. Our hope is, is that the message we deliver is similar to the message that they get from the IGAD countries and others who are interested in the issue.

With respect to Iran, I won't give a grade to our lobbying efforts. In fact, I'm not even sure I'd characterize it as lobbying. What we're doing is presenting facts about an international agreement that 99 percent of the world thinks

solves a vital problem in a way that will prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon and does so diplomatically.

And essentially, what we've been seeing is Secretary of State John Kerry, Secretary of Energy Ernie Moniz—who is an expert on nuclear issues—just providing the facts, laying out exactly what the deal is, explaining how it cuts off all the pathways for Iran to get a nuclear weapon; explaining how it puts in place unprecedented verification and inspection mechanisms; explaining how we have snapback provisions so that if they cheat, we immediately reimpose sanctions; explaining also how we will continue to address other aspects of Iranian behavior that are of deep concern to us and our allies, like providing arms to terrorist organizations.

So the good news, I guess, is that I have not yet heard a factual argument on the other side that holds up to scrutiny. There's a reason why 99 percent of the world thinks that this is a good deal. It's because it's a good deal. There's a reason why the overwhelming majority of nuclear scientists and nonproliferation experts think it's a good deal. It's because it's a good deal. It accomplishes our goal, which is making sure Iran does not have a nuclear weapon. In fact, it accomplishes that goal better than any alternative that has been suggested.

And you've heard me, Darlene, stand up in front of the press corps and try to get a good argument on the other side that's based in fact as opposed to rhetoric. And I haven't gotten one yet. So, if you're asking me, how do you think our argument is going, it's going great. Now, if you're asking me about the politics of Washington and the rhetoric that's taken—that takes place there, that doesn't always go great.

The particular comments of Mr. Huckabee are, I think, part of just a general pattern that we've seen that is—would be considered ridiculous if it weren't so sad. I mean, we've had a sitting Senator call John Kerry Pontius Pilate. We've had a sitting Senator who also happens to be running for President suggest that I'm the leading state sponsor of terrorism. These are leaders in the Republican Party. And part of what historically has made America great is, particularly when it comes to foreign policy, there's been a recognition that these issues are too serious, that issues of war and peace are of such grave concern and consequence that we don't play fast and loose that way. We have robust debates, we look at the facts, there are going to be disagreements. But we just don't fling out ad hominem attacks like that, because it doesn't help inform the American people.

I mean, this is a deal that has been endorsed by people like Brent Scowcroft and Sam Nunn—[*laughter*]—right? Historic Democratic and Republican leaders on arms control and on keeping America safe. And so when you get rhetoric like this, maybe it gets attention and maybe this is just an effort to push Mr. Trump out of the headlines—[*laughter*]—but it's not the kind of leadership that is needed for America right now. And I don't think that's what anybody—Democratic, Republican, or Independent—is looking for out of their political leaders.

In fact, it's been interesting when you look at what's happened with Mr. Trump, when he's made some of the remarks that, for example, challenged the heroism of Mr. McCain, somebody who endured torture and conducted himself with exemplary patriotism, the Republican Party is shocked. And yet that arises out of a culture where those kinds of outrageous attacks have become far too commonplace and get circulated nonstop through the Internet and talk radio and news outlets. And I recognize when outrageous statements like that are made about me, that a lot of the same people who were outraged when they were made about Mr. McCain were pretty quiet.

The point is, we're creating a culture that is not conducive to good policy or good politics. The American people deserve better. Certainly, Presidential debates deserve better. In 18 months, I'm turning over the keys. I want to make sure I'm turning over the keys to somebody who is serious about the serious problems the country faces and the world faces. And that requires on both sides, Democrat and Republican, a sense of seriousness and decorum and honesty. And I think that's what the voters expect as well.

Prime Minister Hailemariam. As regards to South Sudan, I cannot agree more with the President. But we should also recognize that this process has taken a long, long negotiation period. On the other hand, people are suffering on the ground, and we cannot let this go unchecked. And I think the meeting which we are making this afternoon has a strong signal and message that has to be passed to the parties in South Sudan to see that that they're—[*inaudible*]—first.

So I think this is very much essential. And I fully recognize what the President has said, and we'll see how it happens.

As far as Ethiopia is concerned, we need journalists. We need more of them and quality of them, because we have not only bad stories to be told, but we have many success stories that has to be told. And so we need you. This is very important. But we need ethical journalism to function in this country.

As there is limitation in capacity in all aspects of our works, there is also capacity limitations in journalism and that way. Maybe those of you who are in developed nations, you can help our journalists—domestic journalists—to increase their capacity to work on ethical manner. But the only thing, as a leader of this nation, we do not want to see is journalism has to be respected when it doesn't pass the line that working with violent terrorist groups is not allowed, even in the United States. And we need a civilized journalism as a culture and as a profession.

So I think my Government is committed to see this issue, that we need many young journalists to come up and help this country to understand what's going on. And for us, it's very important to be criticized because we also get feedback to correct our mistakes and limitations. So we need journalists. And I think this is our view. And rest assured that we'll continue to do so, because media is one of the institutions that has to be nurtured for democratic discourse. And so that's why we agreed that an institutional capacity-building in all aspects of democracy in this country is essential.

President Obama. Okay. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 1:47 p.m. at the National Palace. In his remarks, the President referred to President Salva Kiir Mayardit and former Vice President Riek Machar Teny Dhurgon of South Sudan; President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda; former Gov. Michael D. Huckabee of Arkansas; Sens. Thomas B. Cotton and R. Edward "Ted" Cruz; former National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft; former Sen. Samuel A. Nunn; and Donald J. Trump, chairman and chief executive officer, Trump Organization. A reporter referred to formerly jailed Ethiopian journalists Asmamaw Hailegiorgis, Edom Kassaye, Mahlet Fantahun, Tesfalem Wadyes, and Zelalem Kibret. Another reporter referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting on South Sudan and Counterterrorism Issues in Addis Ababa
July 27, 2015

Well, let me just express my appreciation to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Prime Minister Hailemariam, as well as all the leaders represented here. They have shown extraordinary leadership in trying to address the continuing situation in South Sudan, and this gives me and the U.S. delegation an opportunity to learn from them what progress has been made, where there appear to be continued roadblocks, and how we can partner with them to make progress.

So I want to thank IGAD for the outstanding work that they're doing, the African Union for their leadership as well. And as a consequence of this discussion, our hope is, is that we can actually bring about the kind of peace that the people of South Sudan so desperately need.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:37 p.m. at the Sheraton Addis hotel. In his remarks, he referred to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa.

Remarks at a State Dinner Hosted by Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa
July 27, 2015

Prime Minister Hailemariam. Your Excellency, the President of the United States of America, Mr. Barack Obama, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen: In the history of the relationship by Ethiopia and the United States of America, this is an exceptional occasion. Never before did we have the opportunity to be able to welcome a sitting President of the United States for an official visit to Ethiopia.

And, Mr. President, we welcome you and all the members of your delegation to Ethiopia with open arms. Your visit is a mark of the long friendship between our two countries and our two peoples, a friendship that I am certain will be further enhanced in the future. It shows the strengths and depths of the diplomatic and cultural relations we enjoy today and underlines our hopes for the future.

Mr. President, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, our links were formally established at the beginning of the last century when a treaty of commerce was signed during the reign of Emperor Menelik and President Theodore Roosevelt administration in 1903. Since then, and even earlier, the United States provided an inspiration for the advancement of science and technology and, indeed, of democracy and good governance.

Ethiopia, similarly, as the only surviving vessel of freedom and independence in Africa, offered an inspiration to many in America. It was a source of an inspiration for a great African American thinker and philosopher, Du Bois, as well as more recently, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. And many saw a source of enlightenment in the spirit of Ethiopia. They saw the courageous struggle of Ethiopia as the symbol of the struggle of the whole community of Africans across the world for civil liberty, equality, and freedom.

Ours is a relationship established on the basis of mutual understanding, respect, and dignity and matured in the struggle against fascism. The role of the United States to the struggle can only be described as historic. People all over the country protested against Italy's invasion of Ethiopia. You raised funds and sent medical supplies. People in New York, Harlem, Oklahoma, Texas, and many other cities paraded in support of Ethiopia. Thousands offered to enlist to fight for us. And even after the war, many more came to Ethiopia to help in our post-war reconstruction.

It is perhaps appropriate to single out one person, as I feel this is an appropriate moment to mention one African American hero who grew up in Mississippi during the early 1920s and came to Ethiopia in 1935 to help us in our struggle against fascism and colonial aggression. Colonel John Robinson was, I believe, one of the first Americans to take up arms against fascism. Having earlier established an aviation school in Alabama, Colonel Robinson was largely responsible for founding the Ethiopian Air Force during the Italian invasion. Called here the Brown Condor of Ethiopia, he then became the first commander of the Air Force.

He was a wonderful example of those Americans who did so actively support Ethiopia both in time of peace and conflict. And here, let me also mention the exemplary dedication displayed by your youth in the Peace Corps, both in the 1960s, all over the way through today.

In this context, let me also remember all those Americans who have given their lives to Ethiopia, not least the late Congressman Mickey Leland who worked so hard to build the relationship between our two countries on the basis of dignity, faith and hope. He would have very much appreciated this visit as a symbol of

the friendship that has been built up over the years and which he did so much to encourage.

We, and indeed other Africans, who owe very real gratitude to your administration and the Members of Congress for the recent renewal of the African Growth and Opportunity Act for another decade. And this bipartisan action by Congress was an impressive example of the way the United States is prepared to assist in the development and growth in Africa. I cannot speak too highly of those Congress women and men who were so active and for so many years in support of this cause. I believe I can see a number of you here today. May I offer my very sincere thanks for your determined efforts. You showed a very real example of the understanding that the people of America have for the problems of Africa.

Your effort also provides another clear demonstration of the way we can and do work together, closely and harmoniously, for joint development of our people.

Mr. President, Excellencies, today we are celebrating a longstanding, time-tested, and exceptional relationship. I believe I can speak for us all when I say that this closeness could now be expressed at a new level of contact and development. The United States, of course, continues to play major role in global efforts for peace and development.

There are the central issues for us as well, and I believe I can say that we have similar views on major regional and global issues. We have been cooperating closely at the United Nations, in the African Union, and in our regional organization, IGAD. We greatly appreciate this support we have received and continue to receive from the United States for the resolution of conflict and peace-building and stability in our region. We are most grateful for your steadfast support to our collective efforts in the fight against violent extremism and terrorism.

Mr. President, with all this in mind, we in Ethiopia would like to infuse a new level of commitment into our relationship with the United States. We have built a firm relationship on the basis of mutual trust and respect, and now we'd like to extend this and raise our links to a new level, to explore further opportunities for development and build a wider network of activity that can strengthen our bilateral relationship. It is something from which I believe we can both benefit.

Mr. President, you have here a very trusted friend, a country and people that highly appreciate what the United States stands for. Now, in the spirit of the friendship, I would therefore like to propose a toast to the bright future that awaits the people of our two countries and to the good health and happiness of Your Excellency.

Distinguished guests, may I ask you to stand and join me in a toast to the President of the United States of America and to all the people of the great nation. Long live Ethiopia-U.S friendship. Cheers.

[*At this point, Prime Minister Hailemariam offered a toast.*]

President Obama. Thank you so much. Good evening, everybody. I would greet you in all the languages of Ethiopia, but I'm told that there are more than 80. [*Laughter*] So that would keep us here all night. [*Laughter*] So let me just say *indemin walachu*.

Prime Minister Hailemariam and distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen: It is a great honor for me to be here tonight as the first sitting United States President to visit Ethiopia. And I want to thank the great people of Ethiopia, including Teddy Mak—he's the one who sang that catchy song upon my welcome. I want to thank all of you for the wonderful reception we've received.

You know Ethiopians are an ancient people in an ancient land. We honor Ethiopia as the birthplace of humankind. In fact, I just met Lucy, our oldest ancestor. [*Laughter*] As your great poet laureate wrote: "Here is the land where the first harmony in the rainbow was born. . . . Here is the root of the Genesis of Life; the human family was first planted here."

When you see our ancestor, 3.5 million years old, we are reminded that Ethiopians, Americans, all the people of the world are part of the same human family, the same chain. And as one of the professors who was describing the

artifacts correctly pointed out, so much of the hardship and conflict and sadness and violence that occurs around the world is because we forget that fact. We look at superficial differences as opposed to seeing the fundamental connection that we all share.

And for more than a century, our two nations have enjoyed a harmony that enriched us both. We've worked together to lift up the fortunes of those most in need. Tonight we also remember former Prime Minister Meles and his dedication to reducing poverty. Together, we've sheltered and cared for refugees fleeing conflict. We've sought to secure our shared future against those who would threaten us.

Of course, of the many contributions Ethiopia has made to the world over the centuries, I'm certain that Americans want to thank you for one in particular, discovering something that sustains people around the world, day and night, and many people in the White House, and that is coffee. [*Laughter*] Thank you, Ethiopia. We are large consumers of coffee in the White House. [*Laughter*]

And Ethiopia has ignited the imagination of Americans for generations. Before African Americans won their civil rights, many of them were inspired by this country—a nation that never suffered the indignities of colonialism, people who defended their freedom and their right in self-determination. You already mentioned, Mr. Prime Minister, Colonel John Robinson, an American who was one of the fathers of the Tuskegee Airmen, he was nicknamed the Brown Condor, who then came to Ethiopia and trained Ethiopian pilots to tame their heavens and, as you indicated, helped to set up the Ethiopian Air Force. You sparked the passion of American poets like Paul Laurence Dunbar and Langston Hughes, who saw in Ethiopia a dignity to be celebrated and emulated.

Ethiopia kindled a commitment to service for generations of young Americans who volunteered for the Peace Corps and who have for decades worked alongside the people of this proud land. For my part, I was impressed by the courage of the Ethiopian journalist that I welcomed to the White House earlier this year, moved by her determination to champion a robust free press, and I very much appreciated the comments you made at the press conference today about the evolution that's taking place to deepen democracy here.

So the deep connections between our peoples is built on the values that we share. We saw that so clearly 2 years ago when the Boston Marathon suffered that horrendous terrorist bombing. And in a gesture of great solidarity and compassion, the runner who won the race, an Ethiopian, returned his medal to honor the victims of the attack. And at this year's Marathon, Americans cheered all the harder when he once again crossed the finish line first with an even faster time. And that, I think, is the hallmark of the American and Ethiopian bond.

We don't give in or give up when things get hard, but we come back better and we come back stronger. So there's no doubt that Ethiopians and Americans are sprung from the same root of life—we have evidence of that. Tonight I'd like to offer a toast: To another century of friendship, to our one human family, and to a bright future for the land where the first harmony of the rainbow was born. *Letenachin*. For you Americans, that means "to our health" or "cheers." [*Laughter*]

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:02 p.m. at the National Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Zeresenay "Zeray" Alemseged, professor of anthropology, California Academy of Sciences; Simegnish "Lily" Mengesha, Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellow, National Endowment for Democracy; and marathon runner Lelisa Desisa. Prime Minister Hailemariam referred to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa.

Remarks During a Tour of the FAFFA Food Factory in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
July 28, 2015

The President. So, just really quickly, for the press who is here, one of the signature projects that we've been initiating is something called Feed the Future. And the goal is to drastically increase the productivity of small-holder farmers all throughout Africa. Because what we know is, is that a huge percentage of Africans are still getting their incomes from agriculture and most of them are very small plots and not a lot of technology and not a lot of inputs, but with just a few smart interventions, a little bit of help, they can make huge improvements in their overall yield.

So I don't know if everybody was able to hear, but one of our farmers who is part of this program increased her yields threefold. All right? So this used to be corn that she was able to produce; this is the corn she's producing now. With three times the yields, not only did she get enough income to build a new house and get some nice clothes, she also was able to buy a cow, which, in turn, obviously gives her additional resources to support her family. She's now able to send her children to school.

And what Feed the Future is doing is not just helping the farmer to increase their yield, now what we're also able to do is to then connect the small farmers to factories like this one so that they have a market and they're able to sell their products for a fair price. In turn, this factory is taking corn, soy, and other foodstuffs and able to package them into nutritious, low-cost meals that are actually then supplemented with vitamins and are enhancing the nutrition of low-income peoples all across Ethiopia.

So, by some smart interventions, what we're able to do is not only increase the incomes of millions of people all across Africa, but we're also able to create new markets and food processing alongside the product—the foodstuffs themselves. And that helps grow the economy as a whole.

We were talking about how Ethiopia has been seeing significant growth, one of the fastest growing economies in the world; a lot of that is because of outstanding women like this who are out there and they triple their income, that's good for the entire country.

[*At this point, the President greeted Gifty Jemal Hussein, one of the farmers participating in the Feed the Future program.*]

The President. So it's so nice to meet you.

[*Ms. Gifty greeted the President, and her remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

Ms. Gifty. I'm glad that we met as well.

The President. I am glad that we met too. We need a good picture. Pete?

[*The President posed for a photograph with Ms. Gifty.*]

Come. We've got to get our translator and the whole team here. All right.

[*The President posed for a group photograph.*]

So, just to give you a sense, so far about 7 million farmers have been impacted by Feed the Future so far. And we're going to continue to increase that in the years to come, and we've gotten terrific cooperation from governments all across Africa. It's one of the things I'll be talking about at the Africa Union today.

Thanks, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:34 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Chief Official White House Photographer Peter Souza.

Remarks During a Tour of the FAFFA Food Factory and an Exchange With Reporters in Addis Ababa
July 28, 2015

The President. So that's another important point about the work that we're doing with Feed the Future, is, we're also getting companies, some of the big international food processors, to make commitments to partner with local food processing so that we can start building capacity.

Historically, part of the problem is that even if you have food that's grown here, the processing is then done someplace else, it's higher up on the value chain, and you don't get the kind of integrated food industries locally that can be more affordable for people and can create jobs and industries here. And part of our goal is not just to provide food to countries that may have food scarcity, but to continually build up their capacity across the board. And so having strong corporate partners alongside local businesses can really make a big difference.

The President's African Aid Policies

Q. Is there enough money for this?

The President. We always want more, and we budgeted more. But what we're able to do is to leverage the dollars that we've got alongside efforts from other countries and from the private sector. And so every taxpayer dollar—every U.S. taxpayer dollar—that we're putting in, we're leveraging a bunch of other money. Of course, the needs still outstrip what we're able to provide, and hopefully, by having built models that we know succeed, we can accelerate this even faster.

But this has been one of the most—there have been questions before about what are some signature initiatives that really make a difference. This is making a difference in very concrete ways. And the goal here, as is true with Power Africa and all the initiatives that we're putting forward, is to make sure that we are not in the business of just donating, but we're in the business of creating entrepreneurs, opportunity, and capacity locally, so that over time, Africa—we want Ethiopia not only to be able to feed itself, we want eventually Ethiopia to be a food exporter as well.

Q. Do GMOs——

The President. Did you guys catch that though? Do you mind speaking for them again? You don't have to go through the whole thing, but just a quick summary.

FAFFA Food Senior Production Adviser Iman Abdulwassi Abubaker. Okay. So we believe in women empowerment especially at FAFFA, because we believe that women are the best candidates to know the real needs of mothers and children, so we try to incorporate them at all stages of the decisionmaking process because we value their opinions and their advice on how to—starting from the very top to all the way to the bottom.

The President. What percent of your employees would you say are——

Ms. Iman. Thirty percent of our employees are female, and 30 percent of those female employees have been working with us for over 30 years.

The President. Excellent. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:40 a.m.

Remarks at African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa
July 28, 2015

Thank you so much. Well, Madam Chairwoman, thank you so much for your kind words and your leadership. To Prime Minister Hailemariam and the people of Ethiopia, once again, thank you for your wonderful hospitality and for hosting this pan-African institution. To members of the African Union, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen: Thank you for

welcoming me here today. It is a great honor to be the first President of the United States to address the African Union.

I'm grateful for this opportunity to speak to the representatives of more than 1 billion people of the great African Continent. We're joined today by citizens, by leaders of civil society, by faith communities, and I'm especially pleased to see so many young people who embody the energy and optimism of today's Africa. Hello! Thank you for being here.

I stand before you as a proud American. I also stand before you as the son of an African. Africa and its people helped to shape America and allowed it to become the great nation that it is. And Africa and its people have helped shape who I am and how I see the world. In the villages in Kenya, where my father was born, I learned of my ancestors and the life of my grandfather, the dreams of my father, the bonds of family that connect us all as Africans and Americans.

As parents, Michelle and I want to make sure that our two daughters know their heritage, European and African, in all of its strengths and all of its struggle. So we've taken our daughters and stood with them on the shores of West Africa, in those Doors of No Return, mindful that their ancestors were both slaves and slave owners. We've stood with them in that small cell on Robben Island where Madiba showed the world that, no matter the nature of his physical confinement, he alone was the master of his fate. For us, for our children, Africa and its people teach us a powerful lesson: that we must uphold the inherent dignity of every human being.

Dignity, that basic idea that by virtue of our common humanity, no matter where we come from or what we look like, we are all born equal, touched by the grace of God. Every person has worth. Every person matters. Every person deserves to be treated with decency and respect. Throughout much of history, mankind did not see this. Dignity was seen as a virtue reserved to those of rank and privilege, kings and elders. It took a revolution of the spirit, over many centuries, to open our eyes to the dignity of every person. And around the world, generations have struggled to put this idea into practice in laws and in institutions.

So, too, here in Africa. This is the cradle of humanity, and ancient African kingdoms were home to great libraries and universities. But the evil of slavery took root not only abroad, but here on the continent. Colonialism skewed Africa's economy and robbed people of their capacity to shape their own destiny. Eventually, liberation movements grew. And 50 years ago, in a great burst of self-determination, Africans rejoiced as foreign flags came down and your national flags went up. As South Africa's Albert Luthuli said at the time, "the basis for peace and brotherhood in Africa is being restored by the resurrection of national sovereignty and independence, of equality and the dignity of man."

A half century into this independence era, it is long past time to put aside old stereotypes of an Africa forever mired in poverty and conflict. The world must recognize Africa's extraordinary progress. Today, Africa is one of the fastest growing regions in the world. Africa's middle class is projected to grow to more than 1 billion consumers. With hundreds of mobile phones—hundreds of millions of mobile phones, surging access to the Internet, Africans are beginning to leapfrog old technologies into new prosperity. Africa is on the move, a new Africa is emerging.

Propelled by this progress and in partnership with the world, Africa has achieved historic gains in health. The rate of new HIV/AIDS infections has plummeted. African mothers are more likely to survive childbirth and have healthy babies. Deaths from malaria have been slashed, saving the lives of millions of African children. Millions have been lifted from extreme poverty. Africa has led the world in sending more children to school. In other words, more and more African men, women, and children are living with dignity and with hope.

And Africa's progress can also be seen in the institutions that bring us together today. When I first came to sub-Saharan Africa as a President, I said that Africa doesn't need strongmen, it needs strong institutions. And one of

those institutions can be the African Union. Here, you can come together, with a shared commitment to human dignity and development. Here, your 54 nations pursue a common vision of an "integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa."

As Africa changes, I've called on the world to change its approach to Africa. So many Africans have told me, we don't want just aid, we want trade that fuels progress. We don't want patrons, we want partners who help us build our own capacity to grow. We don't want the indignity of dependence, we want to make our own choices and determine our own future.

And as President, I've worked to transform America's relationship with Africa so that we're truly listening to our African friends and working together as equal partners. And I'm proud of the progress that we've made. We've boosted American exports to this region, part of trade that supports jobs for Africans and Americans. To sustain our momentum, and with the bipartisan support of some of the outstanding Members of Congress who are here today—20 of them who are here today—I recently signed the 10-year renewal of the African Growth and Opportunity Act. And I want to thank them all. Why don't they stand very briefly so you can see them, because they've done outstanding work.

We've launched major initiatives to promote food security and public health and access to electricity and to prepare the next generation of African leaders and entrepreneurs, investments that will help fuel Africa's rise for decades to come. Last year, as the Chairwoman noted, I welcomed nearly 50 African Presidents and Prime Ministers to Washington so we could begin a new chapter of cooperation. And by coming to the African Union today, I'm looking to build on that commitment.

I believe Africa's rise is not just important for Africa, it's important to the entire world. We will not be able to meet the challenges of our time—from ensuring a strong global economy to facing down violent extremism, to combating climate change, to ending hunger and extreme poverty—without the voices and contributions of one billion Africans.

Now, even with Africa's impressive progress, we must acknowledge that many of these gains rest on a fragile foundation. Alongside new wealth, hundreds of millions of Africans still endure extreme poverty. Alongside high-tech hubs of innovation, many Africans are crowded into shantytowns without power or running water, a level of poverty that's an assault on human dignity.

Moreover, as the youngest and fastest growing continent, Africa's population in the coming decades will double to some 2 billion people, and many of them will be young, under 18. Now, on the one hand, this could bring tremendous opportunities as these young Africans harness new technologies and ignite new growth and reforms. Economists will tell you that countries, regions, continents grow faster with younger populations. It's a demographic edge, an advantage, but only if those young people are being trained. We need only to look at the Middle East and North Africa to see that large numbers of young people with no jobs and stifled voices can fuel instability and disorder.

I suggest to you that the most urgent task facing Africa today and for decades ahead is to create opportunity for this next generation. And this will be an enormous undertaking. Africa will need to generate millions more jobs than it's doing right now. And time is of the essence. The choices made today will shape the trajectory of Africa and, therefore, the world for decades to come. And as your partner and your friend, allow me to suggest several ways that we can meet this challenge together.

Africa's progress will depend on unleashing economic growth, not just for the few at the top, but for the many, because an essential element of dignity is being able to live a decent life. That begins with a job. And that requires trade and investment.

Many of your nations have made important reforms to attract investment. It's been a spark for growth. But in many places across Africa, it's still too hard to start a venture, still too hard to build a business. Governments that take additional reforms to make doing business easier will have an eager partner in the United States.

And that includes reforms to help Africa trade more with itself, as the Chairwoman and I discussed before we came out here today, because the biggest markets for your goods are often right next door. You don't have to just look overseas for growth, you can look internally. And our work to help Africa modernize customs and border crossings started with the East African Community. Now we're expanding our efforts across the continent, because it shouldn't be harder for African countries to trade with each other than it is for you to trade with Europe and America.

Now, most U.S. trade with the region is with just three countries—South Africa, Nigeria, and Angola—and much of that is in the form of energy. I want Africans and Americans doing more business together in more sectors, in more countries. So we're increasing trade missions to places like Tanzania, Ethiopia, Mozambique. We're working to help more Africans get their goods to market. Next year, we'll host another U.S.-Africa Business Forum to mobilize billions of dollars in new trade and investment so we're buying more of each other's products and all growing together.

Now, the United States isn't the only country that sees your growth as an opportunity. And that is a good thing. When more countries invest responsibly in Africa, it creates more jobs and prosperity for us all. So I want to encourage everybody to do business with Africa, and African countries should want to do business with every country. But economic relationships can't simply be about building countries' infrastructure with foreign labor or extracting Africa's natural resources. Real economic partnerships have to be a good deal for Africa; they have to create jobs and capacity for Africans.

And that includes the point that Chairwoman Zuma made about illicit flows with multinationals, which is one of the reasons that we've been a leading advocate, working with the G–7, to assist in making sure that there's honest accounting when businesses are investing here in the United—here in Africa and making sure that capital flows are properly accounted for. That's the kind of partnership America offers.

Nothing will unlock Africa's economic potential more than ending the cancer of corruption. And you are right that it is not just a problem of Africa, it is a problem of those who do business with Africa. It is not unique to Africa; corruption exists all over the world, including in the United States. But here in Africa, corruption drains billions of dollars from economies that can't afford to lose billions of dollars. That's money that could be used to create jobs and build hospitals and schools. And when someone has to pay a bribe just to start a business or go to school or get an official to do the job they're supposed to be doing anyway, that's not "the African way," it undermines the dignity of the people you represent.

Only Africans can end corruption in their countries. As African governments commit to take action, the United States will work with you to combat illicit financing and promote good governance and transparency and rule of law. And we already have strong laws in place that say to U.S. companies, "You can't engage in bribery to try to get business," which not all countries have. And we actually enforce it and police it.

And let me add that criminal networks are both fueling corruption and threatening Africa's precious wildlife and, with it, the tourism that many African economies count on. So America also stands with you in the fight against wildlife trafficking. That's something that has to be addressed.

But ultimately, the most powerful antidote to the old ways of doing things is this new generation of African youth. History shows that the nations that do best are the ones that invest in the education of their people. You see, in this Information Age, jobs can flow anywhere, and they typically will flow to where workers are literate and highly skilled and online. And Africa's young people are ready to compete. I've met them. They are hungry; they are eager. They're willing to work hard. So we've got to invest in them. As Africa invests in education, our entrepreneurship programs are helping innovators to start new businesses and cre-

ate jobs right here in Africa. And the men and women in our Young African Leaders Initiative today will be the leaders who can transform business and civil society and governments tomorrow.

Africa's progress will depend on development that truly lifts countries from poverty to prosperity, because people everywhere deserve the dignity of a life free from want. A child born in Africa today is just as equal and just as worthy as a child born in Asia or Europe or America. At the recent development conference here in Addis, African leadership helped forge a new global compact for financing that fuels development. And under the AU's leadership, the voice of a united Africa will help shape the world's next set of development goals, and you're pursuing a vision of the future that you want for Africa.

And America's approach to development—the central focus of our engagement with Africa—is focused on helping you build your own capacity to realize that vision. Instead of just shipping food aid to Africa, we've helped more than 2 million farmers use new techniques to boost their yields, feed more people, reduce hunger. With our new alliance of government and the private sector investing billions of dollars in African agriculture, I believe we can achieve our goal and lift 50 million Africans from poverty.

Instead of just sending aid to build power plants, our Power Africa initiative is mobilizing billions of dollars in investment from governments and businesses to reduce the number of Africans living without electricity. Now, an undertaking of this magnitude will not be quick. It will take many years. But working together, I believe we can bring electricity to more than 60 million African homes and businesses and connect more Africans to the global economy.

Instead of just telling Africa, you're on your own in dealing with climate change, we're delivering new tools and financing to more than 40 African nations to help them prepare and adapt. By harnessing the wind and sun, your vast geothermal energy and rivers for hydropower, you can turn this climate threat into an economic opportunity. And I urge Africa to join us in rejecting old divides between North and South so we can forge a strong global climate agreement this year in Paris. Because sparing some of the world's poorest people from rising seas, more intense droughts, shortages of water and food is a matter of survival and a matter of human dignity.

Instead of just sending medicine, we're investing in better treatments and helping Africa prevent and treat diseases. As the United States continues to provide billions of dollars in the fight against HIV/AIDS, and as your countries take greater ownership of health programs, we're moving toward a historic accomplishment: the first AIDS-free generation. And if the world learned anything from Ebola, it's that the best way to prevent epidemics is to build strong public health systems that stop diseases from spreading in the first place. So America is proud to partner with the AU and African countries in this mission. Today I can announce that of the $1 billion that the United States is devoting to this work globally, half will support efforts here in Africa.

I believe Africa's progress will also depend on democracy, because Africans, like people everywhere, deserve the dignity of being in control of their own lives. We all know what the ingredients of real democracy are. They include free and fair elections, but also freedom of speech and the press, freedom of assembly. These rights are universal. They're written into African constitutions. The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights declares that "every individual shall have the right to the respect of the dignity inherent in a human being." From Sierra Leone, Ghana, Benin, to Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, democracy has taken root. In Nigeria, more than 28 million voters bravely cast their ballots, and power transferred as it should, peacefully.

Yet, at this very moment, these same freedoms are denied to many Africans. And I have to proclaim, democracy is not just formal elections. When journalists are put behind bars for doing their jobs or activists are threatened as governments crack down on civil society, then you may have democracy in name, but not in substance. And I'm convinced that nations

cannot realize the full promise of independence until they fully protect the rights of their people.

And I—and this is true even for countries that have made important democratic progress. As I indicated during my visit to Kenya, the remarkable gains that country has made with a new Constitution, with its election, cannot be jeopardized by restrictions on civil society. Likewise, our hosts, Ethiopians, have much to be proud of. I've been amazed at all the wonderful work that's being done here, and it's true that the elections that took place here occurred without violence. But as I discussed with Prime Minister Hailemariam, that's just the start of democracy. I believe Ethiopia will not fully unleash the potential of its people if journalists are restricted or legitimate opposition groups can't participate in the campaign process. And to his credit, the Prime Minister acknowledged that more work will need to be done for Ethiopia to be a full-fledged, sustainable democracy.

So these are conversations we have to have as friends. American democracy is not perfect. We've worked for many years, but one thing we do is, we continually reexamine to figure out how can we make our democracy better. And that's a source of strength for us, being willing to look and see honestly what we need to be doing to fulfill the promise of our founding documents.

And every country has to go through that process. No country is perfect, but we have to be honest and strive to expand freedoms, to broaden democracy. The bottom line is that when citizens cannot exercise their rights, the world has a responsibility to speak out. And America will, even if it's sometimes uncomfortable, even when it's sometimes directed towards our friends.

And I know that there's some countries that don't say anything—[*laughter*]—and maybe that's easier to—for leaders to deal with. [*Laughter*] But you're kind of stuck with us. This is how we are. We believe in these things, and we're going to keep on talking about them.

And I want to repeat, we do this not because we think our democracy is perfect or we think that every country has to follow precisely our path. For more than two centuries since our independence, we're still working on perfecting our Union. We're not immune from criticism. When we fall short of our ideals, we strive to do better. When—but when we speak out for our principles, at home and abroad, we stay true to our values, and we help lift up the lives of people beyond our borders. And we think that's important. And it's especially important, I believe, for those of us of African descent, because we've known what it feels like to be on the receiving end of injustice. We know what it means to be discriminated against. We know what it means to be jailed. So how can we stand by when it's happening to somebody else?

I'll be frank with you: It can't just be America that's talking about these things, fellow African countries have to talk about these things. I mean, just as other countries championed your break from colonialism, our nations must all raise our voices when universal rights are being denied. For if we truly believe that Africans are equal in dignity, then Africans have an equal right to freedoms that are universal. That's a principle we all have to defend. And it's not just a Western idea, it's a human idea.

I have to also say that Africa's democratic progress is also at risk when leaders refuse to step aside when their terms end. Now, let me be honest with you: I do not understand this. [*Laughter*] I am in my second term. It has been an extraordinary privilege for me to serve as the President of the United States. I cannot imagine a greater honor or a more interesting job. I love my work. But under our Constitution, I cannot run again. [*Laughter*] I can't run again. I actually think I'm a pretty good President. I think if I ran, I could win. [*Laughter*] But I can't.

So there's a lot that I'd like to do to keep America moving, but the law is the law. [*Laughter*] And no one person is above the law. Not even the President. And I'll be honest with you: I'm looking forward to life after being President. [*Laughter*] I won't have such a big security detail all the time. [*Laughter*] It means I can go take a walk. I can spend time

with my family. I can find other ways to serve. I can visit Africa more often. They—the point is, I don't understand why people want to stay so long. [*Laughter*] Especially when they've got a lot of money. [*Laughter*]

When a leader tries to change the rules in the middle of the game just to stay in office, it risks instability and strife, as we've seen in Burundi. And this is often just a first step down a perilous path. And sometimes, you'll hear a leader say, well, we're—I'm the only person who can hold this nation together. [*Laughter*] If that's true, then that leader has failed to truly build their nation.

You look at Nelson Mandela. Madiba, like George Washington, forged a lasting legacy not only because of what they did in office, but because they were willing to leave office and transfer power peacefully. And just as the African Union has condemned coups and illegitimate transfers of power, the AU's authority and strong voice can also help the people of Africa ensure that their leaders abide by term limits and their constitutions. Nobody should be President for life.

And your country is better off if you have new blood and new ideas. I'm still a pretty young man, but I know that somebody with new energy and new insights will be good for my country. It will be good for yours too, in some cases.

Africa's progress will also depend on security and peace, because an essential part of human dignity is being safe and free from fear. In Angola, Mozambique, Liberia, Sierra Leone, we've seen conflicts end and countries work to rebuild. But from Somalia and Nigeria to Mali and Tunisia, terrorists continue to target innocent civilians. Many of these groups claim the banner of religion, but hundreds of millions of African Muslims know that Islam means peace. And we must call groups like Al Qaida, ISIL, al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, we must call them what they are: murderers.

In the face of threats, Africa—and the African Union—has shown leadership. Because of the AU force in Somalia, al-Shabaab controls less territory and the Somali Government is growing stronger. In Central Africa, the AU-led mission continues to degrade the Lord's Resistance Army. In the Lake Chad Basin, forces from several nations—with the backing of the AU—are fighting to end Boko Haram's senseless brutality. And today we salute all those who serve to protect the innocent, including so many brave African peacekeepers.

Now, I—as Africa stands against terror and conflict, I want you to know that the United States stands with you. With training and support, we're helping African forces grow stronger. The United States is supporting the AU's effort to strengthen peacekeeping, and we're working with countries in the region to deal with emerging crises with the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership.

The world must do more to help as well. This fall, at the United Nations, I will host a summit to secure new commitments to strengthen international support for peacekeeping, including here in Africa. And building on commitments that originated here in the AU, we'll work to develop a new partnership between the U.N. and the AU that can provide reliable support for AU peace operations. If African governments and international partners step up with strong support, we can transform how we work together to promote security and peace in Africa.

Now, our efforts to ensure our shared security must be matched by a commitment to improved governance. Those things are connected. Good governance is one of the best weapons against terrorism and instability. Our fight against terrorist groups, for example, will never be won if we fail to address legitimate grievances that terrorists may try to exploit, if we don't build trust with all communities, if we don't uphold the rule of law. There's a saying, and I believe it is true: If we sacrifice liberty in the name of security, we risk losing both.

This same seriousness of purpose is needed to end conflicts. In the Central African Republic, the spirit of dialogue recently shown by ordinary citizens must be matched by leaders committed to inclusive elections and a peaceful transition. In Mali, the comprehensive peace agreement must be fulfilled. And leaders in Sudan must know their nation will never

truly thrive so long as they wage war against their own people. The world will not forget about Darfur.

In South Sudan, the joy of independence has descended into the despair of violence. I was there at the United Nations when we held up South Sudan as the promise of a new beginning. And neither Mr. Kiir nor Mr. Machar have shown, so far, any interest in sparing their people from this suffering or reaching a political solution.

Yesterday I met with leaders from this region. We agree that, given the current situation, Mr. Kiir and Mr. Machar must reach an agreement by August 17, because if they do not, I believe the international community must raise the costs of intransigence. And the world awaits the report of the AU Commission of Inquiry, because accountability for atrocities must be part of any lasting peace in Africa's youngest nation.

And finally, Africa's progress will depend on upholding the human rights of all people. For if each of us is to be treated with dignity, each of us must be sure to also extend that same dignity to others. As President, I make it a point to meet with many of our Young African Leaders. And one was a young man from Senegal. He said something wonderful about being together with so many of his African brothers and sisters. He said: "Here, I have met Africa—the [Africa] I've always believed in. She's beautiful. She's young. She's full of talent and motivation and ambition." I agree.

Africa is the beautiful, talented daughters who are just as capable as Africa's sons. And as a father, I believe that my two daughters have to have the same chance to pursue their dreams as anybody's son. And that same thing holds true for girls here in Africa. Our girls have to be treated the same.

We can't let old traditions stand in the way. The march of history shows that we have the capacity to broaden our moral imaginations. We've come to see that some traditions are good for us—they keep us grounded—but that, in our modern world, other traditions set us back. When African girls are subjected to the mutilation of their bodies or forced into marriage at the ages of 9 or 10 or 11, that sets us back. That's not a good tradition. It needs to end.

When more than 80 percent of new HIV cases in the hardest hit countries are teenage girls, that's a tragedy. That sets us back. So America is beginning a partnership with 10 African countries—Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe—to keep teenage girls safe and AIDS-free. And when girls cannot go to school and grow up not knowing how to read or write, that denies the world future women engineers, future women doctors, future women business owners, future women Presidents. That sets us all back. That's a bad tradition, not providing our girls the same education as our sons.

I was saying in Kenya, nobody would put out a football team and then just play half the team. You'd lose. The same is true when it comes to getting everybody an education. You can't leave half the team off: our young women. So, as part of America's support for the education and the health of our daughters, my wife Michelle is helping to lead a global campaign, including a new effort in Tanzania and Malawi, with a simple message: "Let Girls Learn." Let girls learn so they grow up healthy and they grow up strong. And that will be good for families. And they will raise smart, healthy children, and that will be good for every one of your nations.

Africa is the beautiful, strong women that these girls grow up to become. The single best indicator of whether a nation will succeed is how it treats its women. When women have health care and women have education, families are stronger, communities are more prosperous, children do better in school, nations are more prosperous. Look at the amazing African women here in this hall. If you want your country to grow and succeed, you have to empower your women. And if you want to empower more women, America will be your partner.

Let's work together to stop sexual assault and domestic violence. Let's make clear that we will not tolerate rape as a weapon of war.

It's a crime, and those who commit it must be punished. Let's lift up the next generation of women leaders who can help fight injustice and forge peace and start new businesses and create jobs—and some might hire some men too. [*Laughter*] We'll all be better off when women's—women have equal futures.

And Africa is the beautiful tapestry of your cultures and ethnicities and races and religions. Last night we saw this amazing dance troupe made up of street children who had formed a dance troupe, and they performed for the Prime Minister and myself. And there are 80 different languages, and I don't know how many ethnic groups. And there were, like, 30 different dances that were being done. And the Prime Minister was trying to keep up with—okay, I think that one is Oromo—[*laughter*]—and they were moving fast. And that diversity here in Ethiopia is representative of diversity all throughout Africa. And that's a strength.

Now, yesterday I had the privilege to view Lucy. You may know Lucy. She's our ancestor, more than 3 million years old. In this tree of humanity, with all of our branches and diversity, we all go back to the same root. We're all one family, we're all one tribe. And yet so much of the suffering in our world stems from our failure to remember that, to not recognize ourselves in each other.

We think because somebody's skin is slightly different or their hair is slightly different or their religious faith is differently expressed or they speak a different language that it justifies somehow us treating them with less dignity. And that becomes the source of so many of our problems. And we think somehow that we make ourselves better by putting other people down. And that becomes the source of so many of our problems. When we begin to see other as somehow less than ourselves, when we succumb to these artificial divisions of faith or sect or tribe or ethnicity, then even the most awful abuses are justified in the minds of those who are thinking in those ways. And in the end, abusers lose their own humanity as well.

Nelson Mandela taught us, "to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others."

Every one of us is equal. Every one of us has worth. Every one of us matters. And when we respect the freedom of others—no matter the color of their skin or how they pray or who they are or who they love—we are all more free. Your dignity depends on my dignity, and my dignity depends on yours. Imagine if everyone had that spirit in their hearts. Imagine if governments operated that way. Just imagine what the world could look like, the future that we could bequeath these young people.

Yes, in our world, old thinking can be a stubborn thing. That's one of the reasons why we need term limits: Old people think old ways. And I'm—you can see my gray hair, I'm getting old. [*Laughter*] The old ways can be stubborn. But I believe the human heart is stronger. I believe hearts can change. I believe minds can open. That's how change happens. That's how societies move forward. It's not always a straight line. Step by halting step, sometimes, you go forward, you move back a little bit. But I believe we are marching, we are pointing towards ideals of justice and equality.

That's how your nations won independence, not just with rifles, but with principles and ideals. That's how African Americans won our civil rights. That's how South Africans—Black and White—tore down apartheid. That's why I can stand before you today as the first African American President of the United States.

New thinking. Unleashing growth that creates opportunity. Promoting development that lifts all people out of poverty. Supporting democracy that gives citizens their say. Advancing the security and justice that delivers peace. Respecting the human rights of all people. These are the keys to progress, not just in Africa, but around the world. And this is the work that we can do together.

And I am hopeful. As I prepare to return home, my thoughts are with that same young man from Senegal, who said: Here, I have met Africa, the Africa I've always believed in; she's beautiful and young, full of talent and motivation and ambition. To which I would simply add, as you build the Africa you believe in, you

will have no better partner, no better friend than the United States of America.

God bless Africa. God bless the United States of America. Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:07 p.m. in Mandela Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma of the African Union Commission; President Pierre Nkurunziza of Burundi; President Salva Kiir Mayardit and former Vice President Riek Machar Teny Dhurgon of South Sudan; and Mandela Washington Fellow Sobel Aziz Ngom. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Statement on the Death of Former President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam of India
July 28, 2015

On behalf of the American people, I wish to extend my deepest condolences to the people of India on the passing of former Indian President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. A scientist and statesman, Dr. Kalam rose from humble beginnings to become one of India's most accomplished leaders, earning esteem at home and abroad. An advocate for stronger U.S.-India relations, Dr. Kalam worked to deepen our space cooperation, forging links with NASA during a 1962 visit to the United States. His tenure as India's 11th President witnessed unprecedented growth in U.S.-India ties. Suitably named "the People's President," Dr. Kalam's humility and dedication to public service served as an inspiration to millions of Indians and admirers around the world.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Lebanon
July 29, 2015

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to Lebanon that was declared in Executive Order 13441 of August 1, 2007, is to continue in effect beyond August 1, 2015.

Certain ongoing activities, such as continuing arms transfers to Hizballah that include increasingly sophisticated weapons systems, undermine Lebanese sovereignty, contribute to political and economic instability in the region, and continue to constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13441 with respect to Lebanon.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
July 29, 2015.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on Signing the Surface Transportation and Veterans Health Care Choice Improvement Act of 2015

July 31, 2015

Well, I am about to sign a 3-month extension of our highway funding. And that's a good thing, because if this wasn't in front of me and ready for signature, we would end up having projects all across the country that would be closing after midnight.

On the other hand, we have now made it a habit where instead of 5-year funding plans for transportation, instead of long-term approaches where we can actually strategize on what are the most important infrastructure projects, how are they getting paid for, providing certainties to Governors and mayors and States and localities about how they are going to approach critical infrastructure projects—roads, bridges, ports, airports—instead, we operate as if we're hand-to-mouth, 3 months at a time, which freezes a lot of construction, which makes people uncertain, which leads to businesses not being willing to hire because they don't have any long-term certainty. It's a bad way for the U.S. Government to do business.

So I want to make sure that before I sign this, Congress gets a clear message, and that is, we should not be leaving all the business of the U.S. Government to the last minute. Think about the things that are still undone as Congress is about to go on vacation. They haven't reauthorized the Export-Import Bank, which creates tens of thousands of jobs all across the country—good-paying jobs—because it increases our exports. When I was in Ethiopia on our trip, we had sold a score of planes to Ethiopian Airlines from Boeing; that produces jobs not just in Boeing's plant in Seattle, but across the supply chain—small businesses and medium-sized businesses, all who benefit from us being able to facilitate the sale of U.S. products to other countries.

I had a group of small-businesspeople here with employees ranging from 12 employees to 500 employees who were saying that their business sales were starting to be affected by congressional inaction on what has traditionally, for 81 years, been a bipartisan support of the Export-Import Bank. That needs to get done.

Congress has had all year to do a budget, and yet Congress is leaving on vacation without the budget done. And when they get back, they're going to have about 2 weeks in order to do the people's business. And this is going to be critical. We've got big issues that we have to deal with on the defense side, in terms of making sure that we're paying for our campaign against ISIL, the support we're providing our allies in the Gulf in dealing with some very big problems, and around the world the extraordinary commitments that our Armed Services have to make in order to keep us safe.

On the domestic side, I've already said that we're not going to accept sequester-level budgets that result in effective cuts to critical programs like education that are imperative for our long-term growth.

So my hope is, is that, although I wish Congress well during the next 6 weeks—they probably deserve some time with their families to refuel a little bit—that some of these next 6 weeks are prepared to come up with a plan and approach whereby Democrats and Republicans sit down and negotiate a budget that works for everybody, and that everybody comes back with a spirit of compromise and a spirit of how do we make sure that our defense budget and our domestic budget is reflective of the core needs that are going to improve prospects for people's lives not just this year, but for years to come.

I also hope that we can go ahead and get Export-Import Bank done, because that's going to be critical for our exports and for jobs here in the United States. And I hope that we have a longer term approach to transportation. We can't keep on funding transportation by the seat of our pants, 3 months at a time. It's just not how the greatest country on Earth should be doing its business.

I guarantee you this is not how China, Germany, other countries around the world—other

big, powerful countries around the world—handle their infrastructure. And we can't have bridges collapsing and potholes not being filled because Congress can't come up with a adequate plan to fund our infrastructure budget for more than 3 or 5 or 6 months at a time. Okay?

With that, I'm going to sign this. And I hope that Members of Congress are listening, and I hope that Republicans can work things out among themselves as well as work out things with Democrats. I think we've got to do some intraparty negotiations as well as negotiations between the parties.

[*At this point, the President signed the bill.*]

There you go. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. H.R. 3236, approved July 31, was assigned Public Law No. 114–41.

The President's Weekly Address
August 1, 2015

Hi, everybody. This week, there was a big birthday you might have missed. Medicare and Medicaid turned 50 years old. And that's something worth celebrating.

If one of the best measures of a country is how it treats its more vulnerable citizens—seniors, the poor, the sick—then America has a lot to be proud of. Think about it. Before Social Security, too many seniors lived in poverty. Before Medicare, only half had some form of health insurance. Before Medicaid, parents often had no help covering the costs of care for a child with a disability.

But as Americans, we declared that our citizens deserve a basic measure of security and dignity. And today, the poverty rate for seniors is less than half of what it was 50 years ago. Every American over 65 has access to affordable health care. And today, we're finally finishing the job. Since I signed the Affordable Care Act into law, the uninsured rate for all Americans has fallen by about one-third.

These promises we made as a nation have saved millions of our own people from poverty and hardship, allowing us new freedom, new independence, and the chance to live longer, better lives. That's something to be proud of. It's heroic. These endeavors—these American endeavors—they didn't just make us a better country. They reaffirmed that we are a great country.

And a great country keeps the promises it makes. Today, we're often told that Medicare and Medicaid are in crisis, but that's usually a political excuse to cut their funding, privatize them, or phase them out entirely, all of which would undermine their core guarantee. The truth is, these programs aren't in crisis. Nor have they kept us from cutting our deficits by two-thirds since I took office. What is true is that every month, another 250,000 Americans turn 65 years old, and become eligible for Medicare. And we all deserve a health care system that delivers efficient, high-quality care. So to keep these programs strong, we'll have to make smart changes over time, just like we always have.

Today, we're actually proving that's possible. The Affordable Care Act has already helped secure Medicare's funding for another 13 years. The Affordable Care Act has saved more than 9 million folks on Medicare 15 billion dollars on their prescription drugs. It's expanded Medicaid to help cover 12.8 million more Americans and to help more seniors live independently. And we're moving our health care system toward models that reward the quality of the care you receive, not the quantity of care you receive. That means healthier Americans and a healthier Federal budget.

Today, these programs are so fundamental to our way of life that it's easy to forget how hard people fought against them at the time.

When FDR created Social Security, critics called it socialism. When JFK and LBJ worked to create Medicare, the cynics said it would take away our freedom. But ultimately, we came to see these programs for what they truly are: a promise that if we work hard and play by the rules, we'll be rewarded with a basic measure of dignity, security, and the freedom to live our lives as we want. It's a promise that previous generations made to us and a promise that our generation has to keep.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:41 p.m. on July 31 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on August 1. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 31, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 1.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders Presidential Summit Town Hall
August 3, 2015

The President. Thank you. Well, hello, everybody!

[*At this point, audience members sang "Happy Birthday" as follows.*]

Audience members. Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday to you!

The President. Thank you. Everybody, sit down. Thank you so much. Well, this is a good crowd here! First of all, can everybody please give Grace another big round of applause. Not only does she do incredibly inspiring work in Nigeria, but I have to say, following Grace is a little bit like following Michelle. [*Laughter*] She's so good that you kind of feel bad when you're walking out, because you're thinking, I'm not going to be that good. [*Laughter*] But she's just one example of the incredible talent that's in this room.

And to all of you, I know that you've been here in the United States for just a few weeks, but let me say on behalf of the American people, welcome to the United States. We are thrilled to have you here.

And your visit comes at a perfect time, because, yes, it's soon my birthday, and that's a very important thing. [*Laughter*] But that's not the main reason it's a perfect time. The main reason is because, as many of you know, I just returned from Africa. And it was my fourth trip to sub-Saharan Africa, more than any other U.S. President. And I was proud to be the first U.S. President to visit Kenya, the first to—[*applause*]—hey!—visit Ethiopia, the first to address the African Union, which was a great honor.

And the reason I've devoted so much energy to our work with the continent is, as I said last week, even as Africa continues to confront many challenges, Africa is on the move. It's one of the fastest growing regions in the world. Africa's middle class is projected to grow to more than 1 billion consumers. With hundreds of millions of mobile phones and surging access to the Internet, Africans are beginning to leapfrog old technologies into new prosperity. The continent has achieved historic gains in health, from fighting HIV/AIDS to making childbirth safer for women and babies. Millions have been lifted from extreme poverty. So this is extraordinary progress.

And young people like you are driving so much of this progress, because Africa is the youngest continent. I saw the power of youth on my trip. In Kenya, Richard Ruto Todosia helped build Yes Youth Can, one of the county's most prominent civil society groups, with over 1 million members. At the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Nairobi, Shadi Sabeh broke—spoke about how he started Brilliant Footsteps Academy in Nigeria, which uses education to fight religious extremism and provide more opportunities for young Muslim youth. I met Judith Owigar, an entrepreneur who cofounded a nonprofit that trains young

women living in the slums of Nairobi in computer programming and graphic design and then helps place them in tech jobs.

So I saw the talent of young people all across the continent. And as President, I want to make sure that even as we're working with governments, we're also helping to empower young Africans like all of you. And that's why I launched YALI—Young African Leaders Initiative—to help you access the resources and the training and the networks that you need to become the next generation of leaders in all areas: in civil society, in business, in government.

And the response has been overwhelming. So far, more than 140,000 young people across Africa have joined our YALI network, so young Africans with new ideas can connect with each other and collaborate and work together to put their plans into action. And I want to welcome all of the YALI network members across Africa who are watching this town hall today. I'm proud of all of you. I'm proud that we've made so much progress together, after just a few years.

And last year, I said we'd launch a new set of tools for our YALI network. So today, we've got more than 30 online lessons available on everything from public speaking to how to write a business plan, mentoring, new ways to network across Africa, around the world, new training sessions, meetings with experts on how to launch a startup. And we're launching three new online Mandela Fellow—Washington Fellowship Institute courses so that all members of the YALI network can access some of the great ideas that you've been sharing.

Last year, I said that we would create YALI Regional Leadership Centers across Africa to provide skills, networks, and opportunities to even more young African leaders. And in Kenya, I had a chance to visit the Regional Leadership Center in Nairobi. Just this morning we opened a new center in Accra. And two more will be opened by the end of the year in Pretoria and in Dakar.

Last year, I said we would do even more to support young entrepreneurs with grants to help youth start a business or nonprofit and with new training for thousands of aspiring entrepreneurs in small towns and rural areas. So, at the recent Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Nairobi, I announced that we've secured more than $1 billion in new commitments from banks and philanthropists to support emerging entrepreneurs around the world, including in Africa, with half the money going to support women and young people.

And last year, I welcomed our first class of Mandela Fellows. This year, the response was overwhelming again. Nearly 30,000 applied. And today I'm honored to welcome you, the second Mandela Washington Fellows class. We're on track to double the Mandela Washington Fellowship program to 1,000 fellows by next year.

And I know you've been busy. [*Laughter*] Over the past few weeks, at schools and businesses all across America, you've been taking courses, developing the skills you'll need to make your ideas a reality so that you're able to continue the great work that you're already doing, but take it to the next level.

That's what Brian Bwembya of Zambia plans to do. Where's Brian? Where is he? There he is right there. So Brian uses music to advocate against things like gender-based violence and to educate youth on HIV/AIDS. So, while in the U.S., he's learned about our health care system, met the founder of an American HIV/AIDS organization, and now he plans to start a record label for music about social change. So, Brian, we're proud to be your partner.

Or we've got Kadijah Diallo of Guinea. Where is Kadijah? There she is. So Kadijah helped lead UNICEF's media campaign to stop the spread of Ebola. And with the management skills that she gained at Wagner College, she wants to work on improving the lives of women and girls back home in Guinea. So we are proud to be your partner.

Or we've got Jamila Mayanja of Uganda. Are you posing? [*Laughter*] She is posing. Jamila is not a fashion model. That's not—[*laughter*]—she started a door-to-door laundry company to employ more youth and teach them entrepreneurial skills. And she hopes to take what she learned during her time at Dartmouth Univer-

sity to meet her goal of getting 1,000 youth to work in or run their own business. So we're proud to be your partner, Jamila.

So that's just a sampling of the incredible projects that are being done by fellows all across Africa. So this program is going to help all of you make a real difference back home.

But Fatou Ba Ndiour from Senegal—where's Fatou? So Fatou wrote me a letter, and she said, if the real value of new YALI is for young people to learn from others, then maybe we should start sending some young Americans to Africa also. The—and she made the point, not just to help poor communities as they usually do, "but to learn from other societies with humility," which I thought is absolutely true.

So I have good news, Fatou. From now on, YALI will give Americans an opportunity. Next summer, up to 80 young American leaders will join YALI and go to Africa to learn from you and your countries. And I mean, you guys are going to have to look after them when they're there. [*Laughter*] Like, show them good places, but not to have too much fun. [*Laughter*] They need to be doing some work while they're there.

So these connections and partnerships and friendships, they forge an understanding that brings our peoples closer together. After 6 weeks here, some of you are now officially Texas Longhorns or Notre Dame Fighting Irish. [*Laughter*] You've shared African cooking with your American friends, but you've also had a burger and a hotdog at Fourth of July celebrations. [*Laughter*] I'm told many of you went bowling for the first time.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I hear it didn't go that well. [*Laughter*] There were a few strikes. By the way, there was at least one marriage that came out of last year's class. [*Laughter*] So who knows might what might happen here. [*Laughter*]

So, as your time in America comes to a close, I want you to remember this is really just the beginning. We just started this. And the truth is that our greatest challenges—whether it's inclusive development or confronting terrorism, dealing with conflict, climate change, increasing women's rights, children's rights—these are bigger than any one nation or even one continent.

Our hope is, is that 10, 15, 20 years from now, when you've all gone on to be ministers in government or leaders in business or pioneers of social change, that you'll still be connecting with each other, that you'll still be learning from each other, and that together, you'll be reaching back and helping the next generation; that you'll not only be making a difference in your own countries, but you'll be the foundation of a new generation of global leadership, a generation that's going to be working together across borders to make the world safer and more prosperous and more peaceful and more just. That's my hope for you.

We've brought you here because we benefit from your leadership, but we're counting on you to work together to make sure that you're also reaching back to those who are going to be coming behind you. Couldn't be prouder of you.

So, with that, let me take some questions. All right? Thank you very much. Let me—[*applause*].

All right. So here are the—I think you've been told how this works, but I'm going to just repeat it. I'm just going to call on as many people as possible. When I call on you, introduce yourself, tell me what country you're from. Make your question relatively short—[*laughter*]—so that we can get as many questions in as possible. And I'm going to go boy, girl, boy, girl to make sure that it's fair. All right? Okay. So let me see who I'm going to start off with. This is all such a good-looking group. I'm going to start with this young lady right here. Right here. Right in the middle. Yes, there you go, with the African earrings. [*Laughter*] Very appropriate.

Q. My name is Faith Chege. I'm from Kenya and——

The President. Habari?

First Lady Michelle Obama/Gender Equality

Q. Mzuri sana.

The President. Okay.

Q. Yes. And my question is, I'm curious how you keep the balance in terms of your background

as an African American and the kind of struggles you've had to get over to get here. And being to married Michelle Obama; she's powerful and amazing. And as a father, as a husband. But you seem to not let that interfere with your work, and you've been effective. So how do you keep the balance?

The President. Well, first of all, I wouldn't be who I was without Michelle. So she's my partner. And the—that's true professionally, but that's true in terms of my character and who I am. One of the things I'm very proud of is the fact that I married someone who is strong and talented and opinionated and my equal. And part of the reason why that's so important to me is because she's the role model now for my daughters. And so Malia and Sasha, they have expectations of being strong and talented and being treated as an equal by their partners as they get older, much older. [*Laughter*]

The balance—I've written about this. The balance isn't always perfect. I think one of the things that my generation, but now even more your generation, has to manage is, if you have two people working in the house, outside the home, how do you manage that in a way that we're both good parents, we're both able to succeed in our work. And what Michelle and I found was that we had to recognize that at any given point in our careers, one person might sacrifice a little bit. Maybe this was a time that she really had to focus on something, and so I had to cover for her more. There were times where I was able to do something, and she had to handle things more.

Now, I'm not suggesting that it's been completely equal, because I'm the first one to acknowledge that she's probably made more sacrifices, given the nature of a political career, than I have. But what I've learned from her is that if she doesn't feel respected and fulfilled, then I'm going to end up being less successful, ultimately. And that's something that I think that men in Africa, in particular—but men everywhere—[*laughter*]. But men in Africa—I've spoken about this a lot. The best measure of how a country does, economically, in terms of development is, how does it treat its women?

And as I said in a speech—a couple of the speeches that I gave while I was in Kenya and Ethiopia, if you're mistreating your women, then you're just holding yourself back, you're holding yourself down. You may have some false sense of importance, but ultimately, you don't benefit if women are being discriminated against, because that means when they're working, you—your family is going to have less income. If they're not educated, that means your children are less likely to be well educated, because typically, the mother is the first educator of a child. So if they see you disrespecting your wife, then what lesson is your—not just your girls, but what lesson are your sons learning from you?

And so this is something that I really think everybody, especially the young generation of African men, have to learn and internalize. And I want to see more men creating peer pressure among themselves. If you see a friend of yours, a classmate, one of your buddies abusing a woman, you have to say something. You have to ostracize them and say that's not acceptable. Because ultimately, this is not just an issue of laws—although, here in the United States, we're still fighting for equal pay for equal work, we're still fighting to make sure that women have the same opportunities as men—but it's also a matter of culture and what our expectations are. And your generation is going to have to change expectations.

You do not lift yourself up by holding somebody else down. And that's especially true within your own family and the people that you're closest to.

All right? So, all right, that young men right there, in the striped shirt and the—yes, you. Yes.

Climate Change

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. My name is Ange Imanishimwe, from Rwanda. [*Applause*]

You have a little cheering section here. [*Laughter*] Got the flags.

Q. Mr. President, there is a big problem of climate change, and the research has showed that Africa will be the most vulnerable continent to climate change in the next decades. Af-

rica is the continent which is responsible to climate change mitigation, and it is reducing the greenhouse gases and the global warming. And I saw that Africa was the last continent to get the funding for climate change mitigation and adaptation. So my question is to ask you, what is the plan of the United States of America to empower Africa so that our community can adapt themselves to the climate change in the next future? Thank you.

The President. Well, first of all, this generation has to understand that climate change is going to be one of the critical issues that you face. Now, oftentimes you'll hear people say, well, environmental issues, climate change, we don't have time to worry about that right now because we have much more urgent issues; we have to educate our children, we have to feed people, we have to develop—maybe later, we can worry about environmental issues—which I understand why a lot of African countries and poorer countries in Asia or Latin America or other places would say that, because historically, that's basically what the United States and developed countries did.

The United States used to be terribly polluted. If you went to Los Angeles, you couldn't—it was like Beijing is now. It was very hard to breathe if you ran outside. You had lakes and rivers that were so polluted that one of them caught fire. [*Laughter*] Now, that's serious; that's some pollution there. [*Laughter*] The same is true in London when London was first developing during the Industrial Revolution, because of all the coal that was being burned and the soot.

Here's the problem. Whether it's fair or not, the issue of climate change is not like traditional environmental issues in the sense that's it's just isolated in one area. Global climate change will affect everybody. And because the changes could be so severe, frankly, the countries that are most likely to be adversely affected are the poorer countries because they have less margin for error.

So, if you have changing weather patterns in, let's say, the Indian subcontinent, and the monsoon rains shift, suddenly, you could have millions of people whose crops completely fail. Well, the same is true in Africa. If rain patterns and drought starts changing, subsistence farmers are completely vulnerable. If you are in coastal communities and the oceans begin to rise, millions of people could be displaced.

So this is something that everybody is going to have to take seriously. Now, what we're going to be doing is, here in the United States, we are initiating some of the most aggressive action to start reducing the emission of carbon that produces climate change. There's going to be a Paris conference later this year in which we're organizing China and other countries that are big carbon emitters to participate and set targets for reduction of carbon pollution.

Now, Africa, per capita, doesn't produce that much carbon. So some African countries have said, well, why do—should we have to do anything? Well, the answer is, is that you have to project where you're going to be 20 years from now or 30 years from now. If you get locked in now in, for example, the way you produce energy that's producing a lot of carbon, given the youth of Africa and its rising population, you could end up being the major carbon emitter if you don't take plans now. So what we're saying is, learn from our mistakes and find new, sustainable ways of generating energy that don't produce carbon.

When I was in Nairobi, I highlighted the work we're doing with something called Power Africa, which has generated billions of dollars with the goal of electrification throughout the sub-Saharan Africa. But part of what we're trying to encourage countries to do is, don't automatically take the old models; think about new models of energy production, and try to leapfrog over the old models.

So, for example, with solar energy, we were looking at solar panels that you could send into rural areas, put on the roof of a hut, and for the same price per day that people are using—are purchasing kerosene, they could have a small—solar panels and pack that generates light and provides what they need. And in fact, it will pay for itself in a year, and then they'll save money after that.

And so, in the same way that you've seen banking and financial transactions off smartphones,

cell phones, leapfrogging some of the old ways of doing business in advanced countries, the same has to be true for energy. And we want to encourage new models. We are going to be providing—the United States and other wealthier countries are going to be providing—billions of dollars in money for adaptation and mitigation. But what's more urgent is how do we create the energy that's needed for Africa's growth and development in a way that does not make the problem worse, but instead makes the problem better.

All right? Okay, this young lady right here. Yes. You've got the mike coming.

Young African Leaders Initiative/The President's Post-Presidency Plans

Q. Hello. So my name is——

The President. Speak up a little bit.

Q. Hello. So my name is Amel Lebatt. I'm from Mauritania, and I'm 23 years old. So my question is simple: You, as a President, and you, as a citizen—a U.S. citizen, will you, after leaving the White House, keep up this program? Because we still need it.

The President. Yes. The—it is a simple question, and I've got a simple answer: Yes. Now, here's what we're going to try to do. We want to institutionalize the program so that the next President and future Presidents and the U.S. Government continue to sustain the program. But—so that's going to be important.

And since I still have this job for the next 18 months—[*laughter*]—I haven't been completely focused on what I'm going to do afterwards. [*Laughter*] The first thing I'm probably going to do is, I'm going to catch up on my sleep. [*Laughter*] So I'm going to do that for a couple months. [*Laughter*] And—but I can guarantee you that one of the things I'm interested in doing when I leave office is to continue to create these platforms for young leadership across the globe, to network and get relationships, to work together, to learn with each other.

And by the way, it's not just in Africa. So we've set up a young leaders program in Asia. We're doing the same thing in Latin America. Because the goal is, eventually, I want not only for there to be a network of thousands of young African leaders who know each other across borders, are sharing best practices, sharing ideas, but I also want you to know young leaders in Indonesia or young leaders in Chile or young leaders around the globe.

Because as I said before, ultimately, you're going to be global leaders, not just leaders in your own country. It begins in your own countries where you can make your mark, but one of the powerful things about technology and the Internet now is, you can learn and forge relationships and learn best practices from everyplace. So, if you're an advocate for women's rights and you're doing great work in Nigeria, it may be that somebody in Burma can, on the Internet, see how you organized your campaign and how you were able to finance it and what you were able to accomplish, and suddenly, what you've done in one country becomes a model for action all across the world.

So this is going to be a top priority of mine. I will definitely continue to be involved in that. All right?

Let's see, I've got a man—I've got to call on a man now. Let's see. Let's see. I'm going to call on this guy right there. Yes, you right there. No, no, nope. Yes, you right there. Just because—it's just because I like that hat. [*Laughter*] That's a sharp-looking hat right there.

Young African Leaders Initiative/Entrepreneurship

Q. My name is Sabir. I come from Madagascar.

The President. There you go.

Q. We, the Malagasy fellows, are involved in the environmental entrepreneurship. So what is the commitment of the United States towards young entrepreneurship and climate change?

The President. Well, as I said before, we are pledging—we've got a billion dollars for entrepreneurship; half of it we are going to direct towards women entrepreneurs and young people who are entrepreneurs, because they've been underrepresented in terms of access to capital. And as I mentioned to the young man earlier, the opportunities for entrepreneurship related to clean energy, related to conservation—which

oftentimes, in a place like Madagascar, involves tourism and ecotourism—there's huge potential there if it's done properly.

So the key is, in some cases, just the access to financing. But part of what you've learned, hopefully, with YALI is, part of it is also having a well-thought-out plan. Now, not everybody can afford to go to a fancy business school and graduate and have all the credentials, but that doesn't mean you don't have a good idea. And one of the things that we're trying to do, particularly through online learning, is to create some of the basic concepts for how a business or a nonprofit can get started, how it can be properly managed, how you can account—do the accounting in a way that's efficient. We want to make sure that we are a continuing partner for you as you start your business and you learn.

And this is where these regional networks that we're setting up is also useful, because not only will we have online learning, but these regional hubs, initially in four regions of Africa, allow you to continue to network and access through the U.S. Embassy or the chambers of commerce or private sector participants who are partnering with us, so that you can have hands-on mentoring and learning as you are developing your business plans and as you're trying to move forward.

The one thing for those of you who are entrepreneurs or aspiring entrepreneurs to remember is all around the world, even in the United States, not every idea succeeds. So, if you want to be an entrepreneur and start a business, you have to believe with all your heart that you're going to succeed, but then when the—and if—one of the businesses fails, you've got to be able to get up, dust yourself off, start—figure out what you've learned, and then start another business. And eventually, it's from continually refining your ideas and exploring what works and understanding what your market is and what consumers are looking for, that eventually, you have a chance to succeed. All right?

Okay. It's a young woman's turn now. Well, she's just dancing over here, so we'll have to call on her. [*Laughter*] That doesn't mean, by the way, everybody should dance. [*Laughter*] I just wanted to point that out. Go ahead.

U.N. Security Council Membership/International Leadership

Q. Okay, Mr. President, thank you. My name is Marilyn Nguemo, from Cameroon. And I would like to find out if you will support Africa as candidate for a permanent seat at the U.N. Security Council. Thank you.

The President. The—so the Security Council was formed after World War II, and obviously, the world and the balance of power around the world looked very different in 1945, 1946, '47 than it does in 2015, '16, and '17. So the United States is supportive in concept of modifications to the structure of the United Nations Security Council. I will be honest with you, how that happens, and how you balance all the equities is complicated. As a matter of principle, I would think that there should at least be one representative from the African Continent on the Security Council, along with representatives from the other regions of the world and some of the other powers that have emerged.

I will tell you that—because, for example, Latin America does not have a country that's represented—it does get complicated. Because you have to figure out how—let me put it this way. Everybody probably thinks they should be on it. [*Laughter*] And so, even in Africa, if you started saying, "Okay, let's say we should have an African," is it South Africa? Is it Nigeria? Is it—see? [*Laughter*] So—Uganda? See? Suddenly, everybody was thinking, well, why not me? The same is true in—Japan considers itself, as one of the largest economies in the world, suitable. Brazil thinks it should be on. India, the world's largest democracy.

So we're going to have to design a process whereby all these various legitimate arguments are sorted through. But what I very much believe is that for the United Nations Security Council to be effective, it has to be more representative of all the various trend lines that have occurred over the last several decades.

One thing I will say, though, about the United Nations: Everybody wants a seat at the

table, but sometimes, people don't want the responsibilities of having a seat at the table. [*Laughter*] And that's happening even now. And the one thing I've learned, both in my personal life and in my political life, is that if you want more authority, then you also have to be more responsible. You can't wear the crown if you can't bear the cross.

And oftentimes, in the United Nations—which I am very committed to, and the agencies there do a lot of really critical important work—but when it comes to, okay, who's going to actually step up and contribute to peacekeeping, who's going to actually write a check when it comes to making sure that we're dealing with the Ebola crisis, who's going to show leadership in tackling climate change, are you willing to speak out on issues even when it contradicts your own interests or when it's politically hard or when it's uncomfortable—well, if you're not willing to do those things, this is not just something where, okay, I've got a membership key and—to the club, and now I'm just going to show off how important I am. And that—you see that sometimes. This happens, and sometimes, it happens at our own agencies.

On human rights, when I was in Kenya, I said that it's not enough for the United States always to be the heavy who has to point out that it's unsuitable for leaders to ignore their constitution and try to cling on to power. Their neighbors have to speak up as well, even if it's uncomfortable. Right?

But—so my attitude is, if you want to participate, then you have to recognize that you have broader responsibilities. And that's something that you—the United States, by the way, for all our occasional mistakes or flaws or our policies not perfect all the time, the one thing we do try to be is responsible. If there's an earthquake or a tornado or a hurricane somewhere, we're there. We're stepping up. When Ebola happened, we stepped up, even when other people were kind of looking around and trying to figure out, well, I don't know, what should we do?

And that is part of leadership. That's true, by the way, for you individually as well. You have to be willing to take some risks and do some hard things in order to be a leader. A leader is not just a name, a title, and privileges and perks. So, all right?

Let's see, it's a—I think it's a gentleman's turn, isn't it?

Audience members. Yes.

The President. All right. This guy looks sharp, right here in the corner. I mean, that's a serious-looking coat. Huh? Look at that. That's a good-looking coat. Don't worry, I'll call on somebody who's just wearing a suit at some point. But—[*laughter*].

Counterterrorism Efforts

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I'm Franklin Ngochi from Cameroon. So we are very grateful for the American leadership in our fights against violent extremism and the military response. So my question is on—what kind of engagement—what kind of support we can expect from you in building resilient communities, especially along the Sahel, where have a—we are grappling with those issues?

The President. Well, this is something that's very important. Look, the sources of violence around the world are multiple. And it's important for us to recognize that, sadly, the human race has found excuses to kill each other for all sorts of reasons. In the continent of Africa, oftentimes, it's been along ethnic and tribal lines. It has nothing to do with religion; it has to do with, you speak a slightly different language than me or you look just a little bit different. In Northern Ireland, it was religious. In other places, it just has to do with trying to gain power or a majority group trying to impose its will on a minority group. So there are all kinds of reasons for violence.

But one of the phenomena that we are now seeing is a very specific promotion of violent extremism that oftentimes is twisting and distorting and, I think, ultimately defying the edicts of one of the world's greatest religions, Islam. And it's being exported and turbocharged through social media and groups like al-Shabaab and ISIL and Boko Haram. And the question is, how do we fight back against those ideologies in a way that allows us still to

be true to the values of peace and tolerance and due process and rule of law?

So the United States is obviously committed to this fight against terrorism. And we are working with countries and partnering with countries all around the world to go after whether it's Al Qaida, Boko Haram. But what we've also said is, in order to defeat these extremist ideologies, it can't just be military, police, and security. It has to be reaching into communities that feel marginalized and making sure that they feel that they're heard, making sure that the young people in those communities have opportunity.

And that's why it's so important to partner with civil society organizations in countries throughout Africa and around the world who can reach young people before ISIL reaches them, before al-Shabaab reaches them, and inoculate them from the notion that somehow the solution to their alienation or the source of future opportunity for them is to go kill people.

And that's why, when I was in Kenya, for example, and I did a town hall meeting there, I emphasized what I had said to President Kenyatta: Be a partner with the civil society groups. Because too often, there's a tendency—[*applause*]—because what the extremist groups want to do is, they want to divide. That's what terrorism is all about. The notion is that you scare societies, further polarizes them. The government reacts by further discriminating against a particular group. That group then feels it has no political outlet peacefully to deal with their grievances. And that then—that suppression can oftentimes accelerate even more extremism.

And that's why reaching out to civil society groups, clergy, and listening and asking, okay, what is it that we need to do in order to make sure that young people feel that they can succeed? What is it that we need to do to make sure that they feel that they're fully a part of this country and are full citizens and have full rights? How do we do that? Bringing them in to plan and design messages and campaigns that embrace the diversity of these countries, those are the things that are so important to do.

We still have to gain intelligence and engage in effective military and police campaigns to eradicate those who are so brainwashed that all you can do is incapacitate them. But the question is constantly, how do we make sure that the recruitment of young people into these terrorist organizations, how do we cut off that flow? And that requires more than just military efforts. Okay?

All right. This young lady right here. Yes, right here in the green and red. Yes, you. No, no, no, right here. Go ahead. No, no, no, right here. Right here in front. Yes, you. Yes, go ahead.

Discrimination Based on Skin Color, Gender, Disability, or Sexual Orientation/2008 Presidential Election

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. My name is Jane. I'm from Kenya. And I'm speaking on behalf of my brothers and sisters with albinism from Africa. As you may know, Mr. President, persons with albinism in Africa are being killed and their body parts harvested for ritual purposes. My request to you is to raise this issue with the heads of states from African countries to bring these atrocities to an end, for the benefit of—as four of us in this room and our brothers and sisters back in Africa. Thank you.

The President. Okay, good. Thank you. Well, can I just say? The notion that any African would discriminate against somebody because of the color of their skin, after what Black people around the world have gone through, is crazy. [*Laughter*] It is infuriating, and I have no patience for it.

I—[*laughter*]—when I was in Africa, I said there are important traditions and folkways that need to be respected; that's part of who each culture is, each country is. But there's also just foolish traditions and old ways of doing business that are based in ignorance. And they need to stop. And the idea that you'd have—that a society would visit violence on people because of pigmentation, that's not a tradition that is worth preserving. That's tomfoolery. [*Laughter*] That's craziness. It's cruel.

The same is true with practices like genital mutilation. That just has to stop. It's—you

don't do violence to young girls just because your great-grandfather or—because there's no reason for it other than to suppress women. That's the rationale of it. That's what it's based on. Bride abduction, bad tradition. End it. Beating women, not a good tradition. I don't care that that used to be how things were done.

Societies evolve based on new understandings and new science and new appreciation of who we are. And so we can preserve great traditions—music, food, dance, language, art—but if there's a tradition anywhere in Africa or here in the United States or anywhere in the world that involves treating people differently because you're scared of them or because you're ignorant about them or because you want to feel superior to them, it's a bad tradition. And you have to challenge it. And you can't accept excuses for it.

Grace was up here; you heard the power of Grace's talking. Now, traditionally, people with disabilities are treated differently because people are ignorant. And when—here in the United States, we passed the Americans Against [with]* Disabilities Act. And that opened up more opportunities, and suddenly, there are ramps so people can access it, and there are computers and new technologies so that people who maybe couldn't communicate before can communicate. And it turns out, there's all this talent and brilliance and people can do these things. Well, then people's attitudes have to change, and the societies have to change. And that's why young people are so important in changing attitudes.

The same, by the way, is true for sexual orientation. The—I spoke about this in Africa, and everybody is like, oh, oh, we don't want to hear that. [*Laughter*] But I—the truth of the matter is, is that if you're treating people differently just because of who they love and who they are, then there's a connection between that mindset and the mindset that led to racism and the mindset that leads to ethnic conflict. It means that you're not able to see somebody else as a human being.

And so you can't, on the one hand, complain when somebody else does that to you, and then you're doing it to somebody else. You can't do it. There's got to be a—some consistency to how you think about these issues. And that's going to be up to young people, because old people get stuck in their ways. [*Laughter*] They do. They do. And that's true here in the United States.

I mean, the truth of the matter is, is that when I started running for President, everybody said—[*laughter*]—a Black guy named Barack Obama, he's not going to win the Presidency of the United States. [*Laughter*] But what I was banking on was the fact that with all the problems that still exist in the United States around racial attitudes, et cetera, things had changed, and young people and new generations had suddenly understood that, in Dr. King's words, you have to be judged not by the color of your skin, but by the content of your character.

And that doesn't mean that everything suddenly is perfect. It just means that, young people, you can lead the way and set a good example. But it requires some courage, because the old thinking, people will push back at you. And if you don't have the convictions and the courage to be able to stand up for what you think is right, then the cruelty will perpetuate itself.

So you guys are on the spot here. If there's one thing I want YALI leaders to come out with is that notion of you are strong by taking care of the people who are vulnerable, by looking after the minority, looking after the disabled, looking after the vulnerable. You're not strong by putting people down; you're strong by lifting them up. All right? That's the measure of a leader.

All right. How much time do we got? I've only got time for one more question. Now, first of all, the women, you've got to put your hands down because I just asked a woman question. [*Laughter*] All right. So it's got to be a guy. And I promised I'd ask a guy in a suit. [*Laughter*] The—I'm just going to ask this guy right

* White House correction.

here. All right. Look, I mean, he's all buttoning up. He looks very sharp.

Audience member. That's my boy! [*Laughter*]

Promoting Opportunity in Africa

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. My name is Olusola Owonikoko from Nigeria. Thank you. I want to say we appreciate all the great work that the United States is doing with Nigeria and many other African countries, especially as it concerns infrastructural development policies and all of those. But I'm of the opinion that if we do not make investment in education more than any other sector of the economy, then we are not building a sustainable partnership.

The President. Okay.

Q. And I'm saying that in respect to the fact that we are all aware of the intellectual drain that Africa is experiencing. Due to the fact the grass seem green on this side, and then we attract—the United States attracts so many intellectuals, we should have stayed to develop and run these programs.

For example, recently, when you were in Kenya, you launched a project around power and energy. I'm of the opinion that if that program is going to be successful and sustainable, then all of those programs should include the partnership of universities. Because through that, we can build the capacity of universities, and then those countries can go around in other African countries replicating that.

The President. Right. Right.

Q. So, in that case, we can control the drain that is moving from Africa to the West or to any other part of the country.

The President. Good.

Q. So I want to ask, that what is the United States doing to control this intellectual drain——

The President. Right.

Q. ——to the Western world? And what are you doing to increase, more than others, the investment in education so that our partnership and development can be truly sustainable? Thank you.

The President. Okay, good. That was good. That was an excellent question. It is an excellent question, but I'm going to reverse the question a little bit. [*Laughter*] The question is not, what is the United States doing to reverse the brain drain? The question is, what are your countries doing to reverse the brain drain?

Now, many of you have friends who study overseas, they study in the West, and then they decide to stay instead of going back home. Now, the United States, we are partnering with every country here. I guarantee you, there are programs to invest in education in your country. There are programs to work with the universities in your countries. I think you make an excellent point that on big projects like Power Africa, we should make sure that there is a capacity-building component. And in fact, one of the things that's been done with our development assistance that we're providing is to emphasize capacity-building.

So, for example, our Feed the Future program, the goal is not to just keep on sending food forever. The goal is teaching farmers to double or triple or quadruple their yields, which then gives them more income, which then allows them to buy maybe a tractor or to start a cooperative food processing plant, that then accesses the market and the money gets reinvested, and now you are building jobs and commerce inside the country as opposed to just being an aid recipient. So I'm all about capacity-building.

But ultimately, why is it that you have so many talented, well-educated young Africans leaving instead of staying? Why is it that you have so many talented, well-educated people from the Middle East or parts of Asia or Latin America who would rather live here than there?

The issue is not just that these are wealthy—we're a wealthier country. I think it's fair to say—and you know better than I do—but part of it has to do with a young person's assessment of, can I succeed in applying my talents if, for example, the economy is still built on corruption so that I have to pay a bribe or be well connected in order to start my business? Or is there still—are there still ethnic rivalries in the country, which means that if I'm from the wrong tribe, I'm less likely to advance? Or is there still so much sexism in the country that if

I'm a woman, then I'm expected just to be at home and be quiet, when I'm a trained doctor? Or is there a lack of rule of law or basic human rights and freedoms that make me feel as if I am restricted in what I can do?

I make this point to say that some of the brain drain is economic. But some of it has to do with people's assessments of, if I stay in my country, am I going to have the ability to succeed? And that's why, when I talk to leaders in Africa, or anywhere around the world, I say, look, if you put together the basics of rule of law and due process and democracy, and you're able to keep peace so that there's not conflict and constant danger, and the government is not corrupt, then even a poor country, you're going to attract a lot of people who are going to want to live there because they'll feel like they're part of building something and are contributing something.

Because the one thing I've discovered is—right now, I live in a big house, but it's a lease; I have to give it up in 18 months. [*Laughter*] A big house is nice for the first month. It's like, well, this is a really big house. [*Laughter*] Then, after about 2 months, you realize, I can't live in all these rooms. [*Laughter*] My life is not appreciably better once I've got the basics. And I think a lot of young Africans would be much more interested in staying even if they don't have as big of a house or the shopping malls aren't as big or—if they felt as if the basics are taken care of, I can keep my family safe, I can practice my profession, I'm not going to be discriminated against, the government is well meaning and well intentioned and is not corrupt, and public investments are being made, then people, I think, would have a sense of meaning in their lives.

That doesn't mean that there aren't going to be some people who would still rather live in London or New York because they think they can make more money. But I think that, as much as anything we do, is going to reverse the brain drain. And that's why what you do is going to be so important, because if you set a good example of going back home and rebuilding your country, and if you, as young leaders, are creating an environment in which young people can succeed and you're setting a new set of expectations about how exciting it is to be part of something new, that can help turn the tide.

So good luck. All right? Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:45 a.m. at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Mandela Washington Fellow Grace Alache Jerry, who introduced the President; and Michael Weinstein, founder, AIDS Health Care Foundation. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks Announcing the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan

August 3, 2015

The President. Thank you so much. Everybody, please have a seat. Thank you. Well, good afternoon, everybody.

Audience members. Good afternoon.

The President. Gina, I want to thank you not just for the introduction, but for the incredible work that you and your team have been doing, not just on this issue, but on generally making sure that we've got clean air, clean water—a great future for our kids.

I want to thank all the Members of Congress who are here as well, who have been fighting this issue and, sometimes, at great odds with others, but are willing to take on what is going to be one of the key challenges of our lifetimes and future generations. I want to thank our Surgeon General, who's just been doing outstanding work and is helping to make the connection between this critical issue and the health of our families.

Over the past 6½ years, we've taken on some of the toughest challenges of our time, from rebuilding our economy after a devastating recession, to ending our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and bringing almost all of our troops home, to strengthening our security through tough and principled diplomacy. But I am convinced that no challenge poses a greater threat to our future and future generations than a changing climate. And that's what brings us here today.

Now, not everyone here is a scientist—[*laughter*]—but some of you are among the best scientists in the world. And what you and your colleagues have been showing us for years now is that human activities are changing the climate in dangerous ways. Levels of carbon dioxide, which heats up our atmosphere, are higher than they've been in 800,000 years; 2014 was the planet's warmest year on record. And we've been setting a lot of records in terms of warmest years over the last decade. One year doesn't make a trend, but 14 of the 15 warmest years on record have fallen within the first 15 years of this century.

Climate change is no longer just about the future that we're predicting for our children or our grandchildren, it's about the reality that we're living with every day, right now. The Pentagon says that climate change poses immediate risks to our national security. While we can't say any single weather event is entirely caused by climate change, we've seen stronger storms, deeper droughts, longer wildfire seasons. Charleston and Miami now flood at high tide. Shrinking ice caps forced National Geographic to make the biggest change in its atlas since the Soviet Union broke apart.

Over the past three decades, nationwide asthma rates have more than doubled, and climate change puts those Americans at greater risk of landing in the hospital. As one of America's Governors has said, "We're the first generation to feel the impact of climate change and the last generation that can do something about it." And that's why I committed the United States to leading the world on this challenge, because I believe there is such a thing as being too late.

Most of the issues that I deal with—and I deal with some tough issues that cross my desk—by definition: I don't deal with issues if they're easy to solve because somebody else has already solved them. [*Laughter*] And some of them are grim. Some of them are heartbreaking. Some of them are hard. Some of them are frustrating. But most of the time, the issues we deal with are ones that are temporally bound and we can anticipate things getting better if we just kind of plug away at it, even incrementally. But this is one of those rare issues—because of its magnitude, because of its scope—that if we don't get it right, we may not be able to reverse, and we may not be able to adapt sufficiently. There is such a thing as being too late when it comes to climate change.

Now, that doesn't—that shouldn't make us hopeless; it's not as if there's nothing we can do about it. We can take action. Over the past several years, America has been working to use less dirty energy, more clean energy, waste less energy throughout our economy. We've set new fuel economy standards that mean our cars will go twice as far on a gallon of gas by the middle of the next decade. Combined with lower gas prices, these standards are on pace to save drivers an average of $700 at the pump this year. We doubled down on our investment in renewable energy. We're generating three times as much wind power, 20 times as much solar power as we did in 2008.

These steps are making a difference. Over the past decade, even as our economy has continued to grow, the United States has cut our total carbon pollution more than any other nation on Earth. That's the good news. But I am here to say that if we want to protect our economy and our security and our children's health, we're going to have to do more. The science tells us we have to do more.

This has been our focus these past 6 years. And it's particularly going to be our focus this month. In Nevada, later in August, I'll talk about the extraordinary progress we've made in generating clean energy—and the jobs that come with it—and how we can boost that even further. I'll also be the first American President to visit the Alaskan Arctic, where our

fellow Americans have already seen their communities devastated by melting ice and rising oceans, the impact on marine life. We're going to talk about what the world needs to do together to prevent the worst impacts of climate change before it's too late.

And today we're here to announce America's Clean Power Plan: a plan 2 years in the making and the single most important step America has ever taken in the fight against global climate change.

Now, right now our power plants are the source of about a third of America's carbon pollution. That's more pollution than our cars, our airplanes, and our homes generate combined. That pollution contributes to climate change, which degrades the air our kids breathe. But there have never been Federal limits on the amount of carbon that power plants can dump into the air. Think about that. We limit the amount of toxic chemicals like mercury and sulfur and arsenic in our air or our water, and we're better off for it. But existing power plants can still dump unlimited amounts of harmful carbon pollution into the air.

For the sake of our kids and the health and safety of all Americans, that has to change. For the sake of the planet, that has to change. So, 2 years ago, I directed Gina and the Environmental Protection Agency to take on this challenge. And today, after working with States and cities and power companies, the EPA is setting the first-ever nationwide standards to end the limitless dumping of carbon pollution from power plants.

Here's how it works: Over the next few years, each State will have the chance to put together its own plan for reducing emissions, because every State has a different energy mix. Some generate more of their power from renewables, some from natural gas or nuclear or coal. And this plan reflects the fact that not everybody is starting in the same place. So we're giving States the time and the flexibility they need to cut pollution in a way that works for them.

And we'll reward the States that take action sooner instead of later, because time is not on our side here. As States work to meet their targets, they can build on the progress that our communities and businesses are already making.

A lot of power companies have already begun modernizing their plants, reducing their emissions and, by the way, creating new jobs in the process. Nearly a dozen States have already set up their own market-based programs to reduce carbon pollution. About half of our States have set energy efficiency targets. More than 35 have set renewable energy targets. Over a thousand mayors have signed an agreement to cut carbon pollution in their cities. And last week, 13 of our biggest companies, including UPS and Walmart and GM, made bold, new commitments to cut their emissions and deploy more clean energy.

So the idea of setting standards and cutting carbon pollution is not new. It's not radical. What is new is that, starting today, Washington is starting to catch up with the vision of the rest of the country. And by setting these standards, we can actually speed up our transition to a cleaner, safer future.

With this Clean Power Plan, by 2030, carbon pollution from our power plants will be 32-percent lower than it was a decade ago. And the nerdier way to say that is that we'll be keeping 870 million tons of carbon dioxide pollution out of our atmosphere. The simpler, layman's way of saying that is, it's like cutting every ounce of emission due to electricity from 108 million American homes. Or it's the equivalent of taking 166 million cars off the road.

By 2030, we will reduce premature deaths from power plant emissions by nearly 90 percent, and thanks to this plan, there will be 90,000 fewer asthma attacks among our children each year. And by combining this with greater investment in our booming clean energy sector and smarter investments in energy efficiency and by working with the world to achieve a climate agreement by the end of this year, we can do more to slow—and maybe even eventually stop—the carbon pollution that's doing so much harm to our climate.

So this is the right thing to do. I want to thank, again, Gina and her team for doing it

the right way. Over the longest engagement process in EPA history, they fielded more than 4 million public comments, they worked with States, they worked with power companies and environmental groups and faith groups and people across our country to make sure that what we were doing was realistic and achievable, but still ambitious.

And some of those people are with us here today. So Tanya Brown—Tanya, wave, go ahead. There's Tanya. Tanya Brown has joined up with moms across America to spread the word about the dangers climate change pose to the health of our children, including Tanya's daughter Sanaa. There's Sanaa, right there. [*Laughter*] Dr. Sumita Khatri has spent her career researching the health impacts of pollution at the Cleveland Clinic and helping families whose lives are impacted every single day. Doctor, thank you. Sister Joan Marie Steadman has helped rally Catholic women across America to take on climate. Sister, thank you so much for your leadership. And she's got a pretty important guy on her side: As Pope Francis made clear in his encyclical this summer, taking a stand against climate change is a moral obligation. And Sister Steadman is living up to that obligation every single day.

Now, let's be clear. There will be critics of what we're trying to do. There will be cynics that say it cannot be done. Long before the details of this Clean Power Plan were even decided, the special interests and their allies in Congress were already mobilizing to oppose it with everything they've got. They will claim that this plan will cost you money, even though this plan, the analysis shows, will ultimately save the average American nearly $85 a year on their energy bills.

They'll claim we need to slash our investments in clean energy, it's a waste of money, even though they're happy to spend billions of dollars a year in subsidizing oil companies. They'll claim this plan will kill jobs, even though our transition to a cleaner energy economy has the solar industry, to just name one example, creating jobs 10 times faster than the rest of the economy.

They'll claim this plan is a "war on coal," to scare up votes, even as they ignore my plan to actually invest in revitalizing coal country and supporting health care and retirement for coal miners and their families and retraining those workers for better paying jobs and healthier jobs. Communities across America have been losing coal jobs for decades. I want to work with Congress to help them, not to use them as a political football. Partisan press releases aren't going to help those families.

Even more cynical—[*laughter*]—we've got critics of this plan who are actually claiming that this will harm minority and low-income communities, even though climate change hurts those Americans the most, who are the most vulnerable. Today, an African American child is more than twice as likely to be hospitalized from asthma; a Latino child is 40 percent more likely to die from asthma. So, if you care about low-income, minority communities, start protecting the air that they breathe and stop trying to rob them of their health care. And the—you could also expand Medicaid in your States, by the way; that would help. [*Laughter*]

Here's the thing: We've heard these same stale arguments before. Every time America has made progress, it's been despite these kind of claims. Whenever America has set clear rules and smarter standards for our air, our water, our children's health, we get the same scary stories about killing jobs and businesses and freedom. It's the——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. It's true. I'm going to go off script here just for a second—[*laughter*]—because this is important. Because sometimes, I think we feel as if there's nothing we can do. What—tomorrow's my birthday, so I'm starting to reflect on age. And in thinking about what we were doing here today, I was reminded about landing in Los Angeles to attend a college as a freshman, as an 18-year-old. And it was late August. I was moving from Hawaii. And I got to the campus, and I decided I had a lot of pent-up energy, and I wanted to go take a run. And after about 5 minutes, suddenly, I had this weird feeling: I couldn't breathe. And the reason was, is back in 1979, Los Angeles

still was so full of smog that there were days where people who were vulnerable just could not go outside, and they were fairly frequent.

And folks who are older than me can remember the Cuyahoga River being—burning because of pollution and acid rain threatening to destroy all the great forests of the Northeast. And you fast-forward 30, 40 years later, and we solved those problems. But at the time, the same characters who are going to be criticizing this plan were saying, this is going to kill jobs, this is going to destroy businesses, this is going to hurt low-income people, it's going to be wildly expensive. And each time, they were wrong.

And because we pushed through, despite those scaremongering tactics, you can actually run in Los Angeles without choking. And folks can actually take a boat out on that river. And those forests are there.

So we've got to learn lessons. We've got to know our history. The kinds of criticisms that you're going to hear are simply excuses for inaction. They're not even good business sense. They underestimate American business and American ingenuity.

In 1970, when Republican President Richard Nixon decided to do something about the smog that was choking our cities, they warned that the new pollution standards would decimate the auto industry. It didn't happen. Catalytic converters worked. Taking the lead out of gasoline worked. Our air got cleaner.

In 1990, when Republican President George H.W. Bush decided to do something about acid rain, they said the bills would go up, our lights would go off, businesses would suffer "a quiet death." It didn't happen. We cut acid rain dramatically, and it cost much less than anybody expected, because businesses, once incentivized, were able to figure it out.

When we restricted leaded fuel in our cars, cancer-causing chemicals in plastics, it didn't end the oil industry; it didn't end the plastics industry. American chemists came up with better substitutes. The fuel standards we put in place a couple of years ago didn't cripple automakers. The American auto industry retooled. Today, our automakers are selling the best cars in the world at a faster pace than they have in almost a decade. They've got more hybrids and more plug-ins and more high-fuel-efficient cars, giving consumers more choice than ever before and saving families at the pump.

We can figure this stuff out as long as we're not lazy about it, as long as we don't take the path of least resistance. Scientists, citizens, workers, entrepreneurs—together as Americans, we disrupt those stale, old debates, upend old ways of thinking. Right now we're inventing whole new technologies, whole new industries, not looking backwards, we're looking forwards.

And if we don't do it, nobody will. The only reason that China is now looking at getting serious about its emissions is because they saw that we were going to do it too. When the world's—when the world faces its toughest challenges, America leads the way forward; that's what this plan is about.

Now, I don't want to fool you here. This is going to be hard; dealing with climate change in its entirety, it's challenging. No single action, no single country will change the warming of the planet on its own. But today, with America leading the way, countries representing 70 percent of the carbon pollution from the world's energy sector have announced plans to cut their greenhouse gas emissions. In December, with America leading the way, we have a chance to put in place one of the most ambitious international climate agreements in human history.

And it's easy to be cynical and to say climate change is the kind of challenge it's just too big for humanity to solve. I am absolutely convinced that's wrong. We can solve this thing. But we have to get going. It's exactly the kind of challenge that's big enough to remind us that we're all in this together.

Last month, for the first time since 1972, NASA released a Blue Marble: a single snapshot of the Earth taken from outer space. And so much has changed in the decades between that first picture and the second. Borders have shifted, generations have come and gone, our global population has nearly doubled. But one thing hasn't changed: Our planet is as beautiful

as ever. It still looks blue. And it's as vast, but also as fragile, as miraculous as anything in this universe.

This Blue Marble belongs to all of us. It belongs to these kids who are here. There are more than 7 billion people alive today; no matter what country they're from, no matter what language they speak, every one of them can look at this image and say, "That's my home." And "we're the first generation to feel the impact of climate change; we're the last generation that can do something about it." We only get one home. We only get one planet. There's no plan B.

I don't want my grandkids not to be able to swim in Hawaii or not to be able to climb a mountain and see a glacier because we didn't do something about it. I don't want millions of people's lives disrupted and this world more dangerous because we didn't do something about it. That'd be shameful of us. This is our moment to get this right and leave something better for our kids. Let's make most of that opportunity.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Regina McCarthy; U.S. Surgeon General Vivek H. Murthy; Gov. Jay R. Inslee of Washington; Tanya Brown, member, Moms Clean Air Force–North Carolina, and her daughter Sanaa; Sumita Khatri, codirector, Cleveland Clinic's Asthma Center; and Joan Marie Steadman, executive director, Leadership Conference of Women Religious.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations

August 4, 2015

The President. It is a great pleasure to welcome once again to the Oval Office my good friend, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

As we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, we can take great satisfaction in the success of the institution in resolving conflicts, in moving forward through its agencies on a whole range of development issues that are helping vulnerable peoples around the world. And at the same time, we are in a period in which the demands placed, the burdens on the United Nations have never been greater. And throughout what was a very tumultuous process, the Secretary-General and his team, I think, have done excellent work and have been excellent partners with us.

Today we spoke about a wide range of issues. At the top of our list was the urgency of a world response to the threat of climate change. And the Secretary-General has been a consistent champion of a concerted, unified, global response to the issue. I shared with him the work that we are doing in the United Nations so that we can be a leader in addressing this critical—perhaps the critical issue—that faces humankind going forward and explained how through our power plant rule, through the work we're doing on renewable energies, and so forth, that we're in a position now to meet the very aggressive targets that we're putting forward in preparation for the Paris conference.

And I encouraged the Secretary-General to continue to work with us to press those countries who have not yet put forward bold, aggressive plans to do so, because we need Paris to be a success, and the world has to step up in a concerted way on behalf of our children and future generations.

We also had opportunity to discuss a range of regional issues. In Syria, we shared our deep concerns about the humanitarian crisis there, as well as the need to stop the killing and arrive at a realistic political process that can lead to a stabilizing of the country and a transition to a government that is reflective of all the people of Syria. And we traded notes on how our

diplomatic teams can work together with other interested parties on that issue.

We also discussed the need to end the conflict in Yemen and address the humanitarian situation there. We discussed some modest progress that's been made in Libya in bringing together the many factions that have created great difficulty in governance in Yemen [Libya]* and have created a vacuum that is causing everything from a outflow of refugees to the safe havens for organizations like ISIL.

And we discussed South Sudan. As many of you know, when I was in Africa, in Addis Ababa, I convened a meeting with the leaders of the countries surrounding South Sudan. It was several years ago where South Sudan was recognized as an independent country, and there was great progress and great hope at that time. That hope has been squandered by Mr. Kiir and the opposition leader, Mr. Machar. Our goal now is to make sure that by August 17 there's an agreement for them to stop the bloodshed and to move forward in a inclusive Government. If they miss that target, then I think it's our view that it's going to be necessary for us to move forward with a different plan and recognize that those leaders are incapable of creating the peace that is required.

On a more positive note, we have now completed the follow-up on the Millennium Development Goals that had been set. We now have a new set of sustainable development goals, as well as financing for those goals, that had been agreed to through a process of international consensus. And they reflect, I think, the newest and best thinking about how we can lift people out of extreme poverty and not just provide aid, but also increase capacity with a strong emphasis on making sure that women and girls are lifted up in the process and making sure that we're emphasizing clean energy, sustainable energy, education, entrepreneurship, and small and medium-sized businesses.

And I'm very encouraged by the process and the leadership that was shown by the United Nations and all the countries involved. What we saw was, I think, far less emphasis on some of the traditional North-South divisions on the international stage and much more of a focus on how do we get the job done and deliver on behalf of the people.

And finally, we had a discussion about how we can work with the United Nations to provide them more support for the demands that are being made to them. Specifically, in September, when we have the United Nations General Assembly and leaders are gathered, we really want to make the most of the summits that are being organized around not only countering violent extremism and sustainable development, but also peacekeeping and are there ways in which we can strengthen the resources that are required in order for us to do an effective job on conflict resolution, but also stabilization postconflict, where the United Nations plays an enormous role. And we have to have greater continuity and greater capacity for these U.N. peacekeepers, because unfortunately, I don't think we can anticipate that all these conflicts are going to be going away anytime soon.

So I again want to thank the Secretary-General for his outstanding leadership, and I look forward to seeing him in September. We've got a lot of work to do between now and then, but I'm very confident that he and his very capable team will be able to do what needs to be done.

Thank you very much. Good.

Secretary-General Ban. Thank you, Mr. President, for your warm welcome to the Oval Office again. I had an extremely constructive meeting with President Obama this time on the eve of a truly historic General Assembly in September and in the aftermath of all this very historic diplomatic achievement that President Obama and the U.S. Government have been making in many areas like Iranian nuclear deals and normalization of diplomatic relations with Cuba and his recent very successful visit to Africa. And all these are truly historic diplomatic achievements.

The United Nations continue to stand working with you and U.S. Government. We really appreciate your strong leadership and support

* White House correction.

and strong, generous humanitarian assistance to many places of the conflict. And I really count on your strong support.

On climate change, I highly commend President Obama's strong commitment since day one in his office up to now, and I count on your continuing leadership until we'll be able to address at this one—this climate change—and have climate change agreement in December in Paris.

In that regard, I'd like to congratulate you and highly commend your visionary and bold leadership announcement of yesterday on a Clean Power Plan. This is a hugely important and visionary leadership. U.S. can and will be able to change the world in addressing a climate phenomenon. And we are the first generation, as President Obama rightly said yesterday, to put an end to global poverty. And we are the last generation who can address climate change phenomenon.

I think this Clean Power Plan powers economies and generates jobs. And also, it can have—generate huge dividends here at home, in U.S. economy. And I'm sure that this will impact a lot of countries. And I really appreciate your personal engagement starting with China and Brazil and India and many others, as I'm going to have some small-scale leaders meetings on the margins of General Assembly. I hope you will really lead all this campaign under your strong leadership.

We are very much committed. We discussed about how to mobilize a hundred billion dollars for climate financing, and working very closely with President Hollande, in his capacity as President of future COP 21, and Chancellor Angela Merkel, in her capacity as the Chair of G–7, and World Bank President and IMF Managing Director, and we see, the Secretary-General. We are really trying to present a politically credible trajectory of a hundred billion dollars to the world so that this can be supported at the COP 21 in Paris.

And anyway, this is a top priority now as we have successfully agreed on sustainable development agenda with a set of 17 sustainable development goals. This is a hugely ambitious and encouraging news. And we also agreed in Addis Ababa last month a financial and technological framework to support sustainable development agenda and climate change. On all these matters, we really count on your strong support.

On regional issues, President Obama has explained and briefed all what we discussed. We are completely on the same page. On Syrian issues, on 29th of July, last week, my Special Envoy and I presented a proposal to establish a four-thematic working group to operationalize a Geneva communiqué, and I'm very much encouraged to find such strong support by the Security Council members. We tried to expedite to provide some political solution to this, operationalizing Geneva communiqué. At the same time, we are doing our best efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to needy people.

On Yemen, there is no military solution, there is only solution by political way, through dialogue. I have been continuously coordinating and working together with GCC members led by, again, the Saudi Arabia. And my Special Envoy is always on the region working very closely with the parties.

We are very much concerned about the humanitarian situation in Yemen, as President Obama said. Eighty percent of population—to be exact, more than 21 million people—are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. Our humanitarian team, despite the difficulties of security and safety, will mobilizing all possible support. I'm urging the world members—member states—to provide the generous humanitarian assistance. This is what I'm really asking for such generous support.

I highly appreciate and commend leadership of President Obama on South Sudan. His recent visit to Africa and convening a leaders meeting on South Sudan really made a big impact. We are working very hard with the IGAD members and African Union so that this August 17 summit meeting of IGAD will be able to have adoption of this agreement between the parties. We are working very hard.

And I really appreciate your strong support for human rights—of human rights. In all these conflict areas, it is the people whose human

rights are being abused. And we are taking this issue human rights up front as priority issues, and I really appreciate the United States continuing support and leadership.

Again, thank you very much, Mr. President, for your global leadership. And I wish you continued good success. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:01 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Salva Kiir Mayardit and former Vice President Riek Machar Teny Dhurgon of South Sudan. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Secretary-General Ban referred to President François Hollande of France; Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany; Jim Yong Kim, President, World Bank; Christine Lagarde, Managing Director, International Monetary Fund; U.N. Special Envoy for Syria Steffan de Mistura; and U.N. Special Envoy for Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed. He also referred to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa; and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Remarks at the White House Demo Day Exhibition
August 4, 2015

The President. Thank you. Hello, everybody. Have a seat, have a seat. Look at you guys with all your gadgets. [*Laughter*] Sit down, come on.

Audience member. Happy Birthday!

The President. Thank you! [*Laughter*] Thank you very much. Thank you. I'm so gray. [*Laughter*] But I feel good otherwise.

Welcome to the White House, everybody. As a birthday treat to me, I thought I'd invite business leaders, investors, and government officials here for the first-ever White House Demo Day. [*Applause*] Yes. I think it's fair to say that when I was 8, I would have been confused by that choice. [*Laughter*] But now I think it's really cool, and I am so grateful to have all of you participating.

On a typical Demo Day, entrepreneurs, like many of you, pitch your ideas to potential investors in venture capital or elsewhere. And it is a high-stress, make-or-break moment that can change the course of your life. You don't—folks are peppering you with questions; you don't know what's going to be coming. Today was much more relaxed because you just had to pitch the President of the United States your ideas. [*Laughter*] So it's no problem—in front of TV cameras that everybody is going to watch. [*Laughter*]

Fortunately, everybody did a stellar job that I had a chance to meet. And here in this room, we've got some of the best and brightest entrepreneurs America has to offer, folks from all across the country who are working every day to transform the way we live and learn and communicate. They have taken over my house. [*Laughter*] We've got people who are developing the next generation of lithium-ion batteries; a system of radio sensors that notices when a senior takes a fall while they're in their home; a robotic teddy bear that helps kids with diabetes learn about managing their health and staying active. There was an app that helps military families transition to their new communities, another app that helps you order replacement parts just by snapping a photo of the old one. And then, there are the folks at Astrobotics Technology in Pittsburgh. They are shooting for the moon, literally—[*laughter*]—with plans to land a rover on the lunar surface in the next couple of years, which is pretty exciting. I wouldn't mind seeing how that turns out. [*Laughter*]

You know, in America, that's who we've always been. We explore next frontiers, we're pioneers with a vision for tomorrow, whether it's Lewis and Clark, Sally Ride. We're the nation of Franklin and Edison and Carver and Salk; Jobs, Gates. And the folks here today are heirs to that legacy, and they're the driving force in a 21st-century economy.

Startups, young firms account for almost 40 percent of new hires. And as we've fought back from the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, those firms have helped our private sector cre-

ate more than 12.8 million jobs over the last 64 straight months, which is the longest streak of private sector job growth on record.

So, as President, I've worked to make it easier for entrepreneurs to strike out on their own. We've made it easier for folks to buy health insurance, making it portable so you can strike out and do your thing. We've made it easier to pay off student loan debt, although there was an app that I just saw, somebody who's really good at working with businesses to help manage student loan debt in an efficient way.

We have tried to download government data sets for new apps and innovations, following in the path of the National Weather Service and other data that's turned into commercial ventures. We've worked to connect to high-speed broadband and open access for a free and open Internet. And we're working on trade agreements to open up new markets for companies to sell their products overseas. Thanks to the bipartisan JOBS Act that I signed, it's easier for innovative companies to take the next step and go public. And when it's fully implemented, more startups and small businesses will be able to accept support from regular investors through crowdfunding.

So today, America is home to more high-tech companies than anyplace else in the world. And business leaders have declared that China is no longer the world's number-one place to invest, America is. With technological advancements like cloud computing and big data and 3–D printing, the fact is, there has never been a better time to launch an idea and bring it to scale right here in the United States, right now.

But we've got to make sure that we're taking full advantage of this moment by tapping all the talent America has to offer, no matter who they are or where they set up shop. And obviously, there are chronic challenges for any entrepreneur. Capital is tough to come by, but it's even tougher if you're not in one of a handful of cities that have a well-developed venture capital presence. It's always hard to get in front of the right people, but sometimes, it's harder if you're a woman or an underrepresented minority who all too often have to fight just to get a seat at the table.

Right now one study shows that fewer than 3 percent of venture-capital-backed companies have a woman as their CEO. Another study showed that fewer than 1 percent have an African American founder. Yet we've seen again and again that companies with diverse leadership often outperform those that don't. That's the market that is out there, not just here in the United States, but globally. So that lack of participation from everybody isn't good for business.

We've got to make sure that everybody is getting a fair shot; the next Steve Jobs might be named Stephanie or Esteban. [*Laughter*] They might never set foot in Silicon Valley. We've got to unleash the full potential of every American, not leave more than half the team on the bench.

And that's something that a growing number of tech companies have begun to recognize. So, in January, Intel announced that by 2020 they would achieve full representation of women and minorities in their U.S. workforce. Last week, Pinterest also announced ambitious new diversity goals of their own. Today we've got a series of public and private commitments to build on those efforts.

We've got more than 40 leading venture capital firms who are pledging more—pledging to do more to track and hire and support women and underrepresented minorities and veterans at their firms and portfolio companies. A pair of leading pension funds are committing to diversifying the ranks of those who manage their money. We've got companies like Xerox, Box, and others that are going to institute their own version of the NFL's Rooney Rule, named after my good friend Dan Rooney, of the Pittsburgh Steelers, which means interviewing at least one woman and one person of color for every senior position, just so that folks get a chance to get in the door.

And more than a hundred deans at America's engineering schools are committing to recruit and retain more diverse student bodies, building the pipeline for the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs, because this is

something we are seeing again and again and again. We are not producing all the technical talent, all the engineers that we need. And part of the reason is because too many girls and too many young people of color are getting intimidated and winnowed out of the process, not being mentored, not being encouraged, and we deprive ourselves of the talent that we need in order for us to continue to be a dynamic, innovative economy, because that's the part of the population that's growing.

So my administration is also going to do our part. We're expanding our TechHire initiative to 10 new cities and States, bringing together employers and local governments to create newer, faster training pathways, like coding boot camps, so that a more diverse group of workers can get hired and perhaps eventually start a business of their own. We're scaling up the National Science Foundation's successful Innovation Corps program at six more Federal agencies so we can help more of our scientists move their ideas out of the lab and into the marketplace.

More than 50 new cities have signed up to our "Startup in a Day" initiative. Many of them have earned cash prizes from the Small Business Administration to help them clear away all the red tape so that a local entrepreneur can apply for all the licenses and permits that they need to start a business in just 1 day.

So we hope that these efforts are going to open up new opportunities for all of our entrepreneurs—all of our would-be entrepreneurs. And in the months ahead, I look forward to seeing more folks across this country—investors, accelerators, universities, civic leaders, corporate giants, growing startups—all take new steps to build on these actions. Because you never know who's going to have the next big idea or what path will lead them there.

So I'm just going to give you a couple of examples because these are folks who are here. Take the story of Ramona Pierson. Where's Ramona? There—Ramona is right back here. So I was just talking to Ramona. Ramona is—this is a pretty remarkable story. Back in 1984, when she was 22 years old, Ramona had already been a U.S. Marine. She was a young, dedicated, highly skilled professional in the prime of her life. One day, she's out for a run, and she was hit by a drunk driver. And she was in a coma for 18 months, woke up 18 months later, weighed 64 pounds, was bald and was blind, could not walk, could not speak, was moved into a nursing home. I think it's fair to say that a lot of people would be broken by that. In that nursing home, Ramona was surrounded by dozens of senior citizens, folks with a lifetime of knowledge and expertise and skills of their own as parents and teachers and community leaders. And they helped coach Ramona back to health. And she—they became her mentors. And over the next few years, Ramona had to relearn the most basic skills—walking, speaking, crossing the street—and she gained the perspective of others with challenges.

And decades later now, Ramona looks back on that process of learning by connecting with others as the catalyst for a startup she launched 3 years ago called Declara. And it's a technology platform that combines the power of a search engine with a worldwide network of experts so that we can all learn things faster from our fellow citizens and their lifetimes of knowledge. It's sort of like a Google meets Facebook, but it's there's all kind of stuff to it. Ramona was explaining it to me, and it was fascinating, and I understood about half of it. [*Laughter*] So today, Declara has users all around the world. It's attracted millions of dollars of capital. They've got a team of 65 employees, with women serving as CEO, COO, and head of data sciences.

That's the power of a good idea. And when Ramona was in that nursing home, I don't think anybody would have imagined that she was going to be a candidate to be a significant tech entrepreneur. Ideas can come from anybody and anywhere and can be inspired by any kind of life experience. And we've got to judge those ideas on their merits. We've got to make sure they're not filtered by misperceptions about who people are or who's capable of dreaming something up. That's at the very heart of America, the idea that any of us can make it if we try.

And together, if we have enough effort and enough urgency, our idea can move the world. We can all be a part of making sure everybody has that chance. And that's what the Demo Day is about here today. That's what our initiatives are about. That's what our outstanding 40 partners that are making announcements are all about here today. I'm very proud of them. And I can't wait to see what all of you end up doing.

And keep in mind that in about 18 months, I'm going to need a job. [*Laughter*] I've got some skills.

Thank you very much, everybody. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:14 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to John Thornton, chief executive officer, Astrobotic; William H. Gates III, founder, technology adviser, and board member, Microsoft Corp.; Tony Aguilar, founder, Student Loan Benefits; former U.S. Ambassador to Ireland Daniel M. Rooney, in his capacity as chairman of the National Football League's Pittsburgh Steelers; and Ramona Pierson, chief executive officer, Declara Inc.

Remarks on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action To Prevent Iran From Obtaining a Nuclear Weapon

August 5, 2015

Thank you so much. Everybody, please have a seat. Thank you very much. I apologize for the slight delay. Even Presidents have problems with toner. [*Laughter*]

It is a great honor to be back at American University, which has prepared generations of young people for service in public life. I want to thank President Kerwin and the American University family for hosting us here today.

Fifty-two years ago, President Kennedy, at the height of the cold war, addressed this same university on the subject of peace. The Berlin Wall had just been built. The Soviet Union had tested the most powerful weapons ever developed. China was on the verge of acquiring a nuclear bomb. Less than 20 years after the end of World War II, the prospect of nuclear war was all too real. With all of the threats that we face today, it's hard to appreciate how much more dangerous the world was at that time.

In light of these mounting threats, a number of strategists here in the United States argued that we had to take military action against the Soviets, to hasten what they saw as inevitable confrontation. But the young President offered a different vision. Strength, in his view, included powerful Armed Forces and a willingness to stand up for our values around the world. But he rejected the prevailing attitude among some foreign policy circles that equated security with a perpetual war footing. Instead, he promised strong, principled American leadership on behalf of what he called a "practical" and "attainable peace," a peace "based not on a sudden revolution in human nature, but on a gradual evolution in human institutions, on a series of concrete actions and effective agreements."

Such wisdom would help guide our ship of state through some of the most perilous moments in human history. With Kennedy at the helm, the Cuban missile crisis was resolved peacefully. Under Democratic and Republican Presidents, new agreements were forged: a Non-Proliferation Treaty that prohibited nations from acquiring nuclear weapons, while allowing them to access peaceful nuclear energy; the SALT and START Treaties, which bound the United States and the Soviet Union to cooperation on arms control. Not every conflict was averted, but the world avoided nuclear catastrophe, and we created the time and the space to win the cold war without firing a shot at the Soviets.

The agreement now reached between the international community and the Islamic Republic of Iran builds on this tradition of strong, principled diplomacy. After 2 years of negotiations, we have achieved a detailed arrangement that permanently prohibits Iran from obtaining

a nuclear weapon. It cuts off all of Iran's pathways to a bomb. It contains the most comprehensive inspection and verification regime ever negotiated to monitor a nuclear program. As was true in previous treaties, it does not resolve all problems; it certainly doesn't resolve all our problems with Iran. It does not ensure a warming between our two countries. But it achieves one of our most critical security objectives. As such, it is a very good deal.

Today I want to speak to you about this deal and the most consequential foreign policy debate that our country has had since the invasion of Iraq, as Congress decides whether to support this historic diplomatic breakthrough, or instead blocks it over the objection of the vast majority of the world. Between now and the congressional vote in September, you are going to hear a lot of arguments against this deal, backed by tens of millions of dollars in advertising. And if the rhetoric in these ads—and the accompanying commentary—sounds familiar, it should, for many of the same people who argued for the war in Iraq are now making the case against the Iran nuclear deal.

Now, when I ran for President 8 years ago as a candidate who had opposed the decision to go to war in Iraq, I said that America didn't just have to end that war, we had to end the mindset that got us there in the first place. It was a mindset characterized by a preference for military action over diplomacy; a mindset that put a premium on unilateral U.S. action over the painstaking work of building international consensus; a mindset that exaggerated threats beyond what the intelligence supported. Leaders did not level with the American people about the costs of war, insisting that we could easily impose our will on a part of the world with a profoundly different culture and history. And of course, those calling for war labeled themselves strong and decisive, while dismissing those who disagreed as weak, even appeasers of a malevolent adversary.

More than a decade later, we still live with the consequences of the decision to invade Iraq. Our troops achieved every mission they were given. But thousands of lives were lost, tens of thousands wounded. That doesn't count the lives lost among Iraqis. Nearly a trillion dollars was spent. Today, Iraq remains gripped by sectarian conflict, and the emergence of Al Qaida in Iraq has now evolved into ISIL. And ironically, the single greatest beneficiary in the region of that war was the Islamic Republic of Iran, which saw its strategic position strengthened by the removal of its longstanding enemy, Saddam Hussein.

I raise this recent history because now more than ever, we need clear thinking in our foreign policy. And I raise this history because it bears directly on how we respond to the Iranian nuclear program.

That program has been around for decades, dating back to the Shah's efforts—with U.S. support—in the 1960s and seventies to develop nuclear power. The theocracy that overthrew the Shah accelerated the program after the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, a war in which Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons to brutal effect, and Iran's nuclear program advanced steadily through the 1990s, despite unilateral U.S. sanctions. When the Bush administration took office, Iran had no centrifuges—the machines necessary to produce material for a bomb—that were spinning to enrich uranium. But despite repeated warnings from the United States Government, by the time I took office, Iran had installed several thousand centrifuges, and showed no inclination to slow, much less halt, its program.

Among U.S. policymakers, there's never been disagreement on the danger posed by an Iranian nuclear bomb. Democrats and Republicans alike have recognized that it would spark an arms race in the world's most unstable region and turn every crisis into a potential nuclear showdown. It would embolden terrorist groups like Hizballah and pose an unacceptable risk to Israel, which Iranian leaders have repeatedly threatened to destroy. More broadly, it could unravel the global commitment to nonproliferation that the world has done so much to defend.

The question, then, is not whether to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, but how. Even before taking office, I made clear that Iran would not be allowed to acquire a nu-

clear weapon on my watch, and it's been my policy throughout my Presidency to keep all options—including possible military options—on the table to achieve that objective. But I have also made clear my preference for a peaceful, diplomatic resolution of the issue, not just because of the costs of war, but also because a negotiated agreement offered a more effective, verifiable, and durable resolution.

And so, in 2009, we let the Iranians know that a diplomatic path was available. Iran failed to take that path, and our intelligence community exposed the existence of a covert nuclear facility at Fordow.

Now, some have argued that Iran's intransigence showed the futility of negotiations. In fact, it was our very willingness to negotiate that helped America rally the world to our cause and secured international participation in an unprecedented framework of commercial and financial sanctions. Keep in mind, unilateral U.S. sanctions against Iran had been in place for decades, but had failed to pressure Iran to the negotiating table. What made our new approach more effective was our ability to draw upon new U.N. Security Council resolutions, combining strong enforcement with voluntary agreements from nations like China and India, Japan and South Korea, to reduce their purchases of Iranian oil, as well as the imposition by our European allies of a total oil embargo.

Winning this global buy-in was not easy. I know. I was there. [*Laughter*] In some cases, our partners lost billions of dollars in trade because of their decision to cooperate. But we were able to convince them that absent a diplomatic resolution, the result could be war, with major disruptions to the global economy and even greater instability in the Middle East. In other words, it was diplomacy, hard, painstaking diplomacy—not saber-rattling, not tough talk—that ratcheted up the pressure on Iran.

With the world now unified beside us, Iran's economy contracted severely and remains about 20-percent smaller today than it would have otherwise been. No doubt this hardship played a role in Iran's 2013 elections, when the Iranian people elected a new Government that promised to improve the economy through engagement with the world. A window had cracked open. Iran came back to the nuclear talks. And after a series of negotiations, Iran agreed with the international community to an interim deal, a deal that rolled back Iran's stockpile of near-20-percent-enriched uranium and froze the progress of its program so that the P5-plus-1—the United States, China, Russia, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and the European Union—could negotiate a comprehensive deal without the fear that Iran might be stalling for time.

Now, let me pause here just to remind everybody that when the interim deal was announced, critics—the same critics we're hearing from now—called it "a historic mistake." They insisted Iran would ignore its obligations. They warned that sanctions would unravel. They warned that Iran would receive a windfall to support terrorism.

The critics were wrong. The progress of Iran's nuclear program was halted for the first time in a decade. Its stockpile of dangerous materials was reduced. The deployment of its advanced centrifuges was stopped. Inspections did increase. There was no flood of money into Iran, and the architecture of the international sanctions remained in place. In fact, the interim deal worked so well that the same people who criticized it so fiercely now cite it as an excuse not to support the broader accord. Think about that. What was once proclaimed as a historic mistake is now held up as a success and a reason to not sign the comprehensive deal. So keep that in mind when you assess the credibility of the arguments being made against diplomacy today.

Despite the criticism, we moved ahead to negotiate a more lasting, comprehensive deal. Our diplomats, led by Secretary of State John Kerry, kept our coalition united. Our nuclear experts—including one of the best in the world, Secretary of Energy Ernie Moniz—worked tirelessly on the technical details. In July, we reached a comprehensive plan of action that meets our objectives. Under its terms, Iran is never allowed to build a nuclear weapon. And while Iran, like any party to the

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, is allowed to access peaceful nuclear energy, the agreement strictly defines the manner in which its nuclear program can proceed, ensuring that all pathways to a bomb are cut off.

Here's how. Under this deal, Iran cannot acquire the plutonium needed for a bomb. The core of its heavy-water reactor at Arak will be pulled out, filled with concrete, and replaced one—with one that will not produce plutonium for a weapon. The spent fuel from that reactor will be shipped out of the country, and Iran will not build any new heavy-water reactors for at least 15 years.

Iran will also not be able to acquire the enriched uranium that could be used for a bomb. As soon as this deal is implemented, Iran will remove two-thirds of its centrifuges. For the next decade, Iran will not enrich uranium with its more advanced centrifuges. Iran will not enrich uranium at the previously undisclosed Fordow facility, which is buried deep underground, for at least 15 years. Iran will get rid of 98 percent of its stockpile of enriched uranium, which is currently enough for up to 10 nuclear bombs, for the next 15 years. Even after those 15 years have passed, Iran will never have the right to use a peaceful program as cover to pursue a weapon.

And in fact, this deal shuts off the type of covert path Iran pursued in the past. There will be 24/7 monitoring of Iran's key nuclear facilities. For decades, inspectors will have access to Iran's entire nuclear supply chain, from the uranium mines and mills where they get raw materials to the centrifuge production facilities where they make machines to enrich it. And understand why this is so important: For Iran to cheat, it has to build a lot more than just one building or a covert facility like Fordow. It would need a secret source for every single aspect of its program. No nation in history has been able to pull off such subterfuge when subjected to such rigorous inspections. And under the terms of the deal, inspectors will have the permanent ability to inspect any suspicious sites in Iran.

And finally, Iran has powerful incentives to keep its commitments. Before getting sanctions relief, Iran has to take significant, concrete steps like removing centrifuges and getting rid of its stockpiles. If Iran violates the agreement over the next decade, all of the sanctions can snap back into place. We won't need the support of other members of the U.N. Security Council; America can trigger snapback on our own. On the other hand, if Iran abides by the deal and its economy begins to reintegrate with the world, the incentive to avoid snapback will only grow.

So this deal is not just the best choice among alternatives: this is the strongest nonproliferation agreement ever negotiated. And because this is such a strong deal, every nation in the world that has commented publicly, with the exception of the Israeli Government, has expressed support. The United Nations Security Council has unanimously supported it. The majority of arms control and nonproliferation experts support it. Over 100 former Ambassadors—who served under Republican and Democratic Presidents—support it. I've had to make a lot of tough calls as President, but whether or not this deal is good for American security is not one of those calls. It's not even close.

Unfortunately, we're living through a time in American politics where every foreign policy decision is viewed through a partisan prism, evaluated by headline-grabbing sound bites. And so, before the ink was even dry on this deal—before Congress even read it—a majority of Republicans declared their virulent opposition. Lobbyists and pundits were suddenly transformed into armchair nuclear scientists—[*laughter*]—disputing the assessments of experts like Secretary Moniz, challenging his findings, offering multiple—and sometimes contradictory—arguments about why Congress should reject this deal. But if you repeat these arguments long enough, they can get some traction. So let me address just a few of the arguments that have been made so far in opposition to this deal.

First, there are those who say the inspections are not strong enough because inspectors can't go anywhere in Iran at any time with no notice. Well, here's the truth: Inspectors will

be allowed daily access to Iran's key nuclear sites. If there is a reason for inspecting a suspicious, undeclared site anywhere in Iran, inspectors will get that access, even if Iran objects. This access can be with as little as 24 hours' notice. And while the process for resolving a dispute about access can take up to 24 days, once we've identified a site that raises suspicion, we will be watching it continuously until inspectors get in. And by the way, nuclear material isn't something you hide in the closet. [*Laughter*] It can leave a trace for years. The bottom line is, if Iran cheats, we can catch them, and we will.

Second, there are those who argue that the deal isn't strong enough because some of the limitations on Iran's civilian nuclear program expire in 15 years. Let me repeat: The prohibition on Iran having a nuclear weapon is permanent. The ban on weapons-related research is permanent. Inspections are permanent. It is true that some of the limitations regarding Iran's peaceful program last only 15 years. But that's how arms control agreements work. The first SALT Treaty with the Soviet Union lasted 5 years. The first START Treaty lasted 15 years. And in our current situation, if 15 or 20 years from now, Iran tries to build a bomb, this deal ensures that the United States will have better tools to detect it, a stronger basis under international law to respond, and the same options available to stop a weapons program as we have today, including, if necessary, military options.

On the other hand, without this deal, the scenarios that critics warn about happening in 15 years could happen 6 months from now. By killing this deal, Congress would not merely pave Iran's pathway to a bomb, it would accelerate it.

Third, a number of critics say the deal isn't worth it because Iran will get billions of dollars in sanctions relief. Now, let's be clear: The international sanctions were put in place precisely to get Iran to agree to constraints on its program. That's the point of sanctions. Any negotiated agreement with Iran would involve sanctions relief. So an argument against sanctions relief is effectively an argument against any diplomatic resolution of this issue.

It is true that if Iran lives up to its commitments, it will gain access to roughly $56 billion of its own money, revenue frozen overseas by other countries. But the notion that this will be a game changer, with all this money funneled into Iran's pernicious activities, misses the reality of Iran's current situation. Partly because of our sanctions, the Iranian Government has over half a trillion dollars in urgent requirements, from funding pensions and salaries to paying for crumbling infrastructure. Iran's leaders have raised the expectations of their people that sanctions relief will improve their lives. Even a repressive regime like Iran's cannot completely ignore those expectations. And that's why our best analysts expect the bulk of this revenue to go into spending that improves the economy and benefits the lives of the Iranian people.

Now, this is not to say that sanctions relief will provide no benefit to Iran's military. Let's stipulate that some of that money will flow to activities that we object to. We have no illusions about the Iranian Government or the significance of the Revolutionary Guard and the Quds Force. Iran supports terrorist organizations like Hizballah. It supports proxy groups that threaten our interests and the interests of our allies, including proxy groups who killed our troops in Iraq. They try to destabilize our Gulf partners. But Iran has been engaged in these activities for decades. They engaged in them before sanctions and while sanctions were in place. In fact, Iran even engaged in these activities in the middle of the Iran-Iraq war, a war that cost them nearly a million lives and hundreds of billions of dollars. The truth is that Iran has always found a way to fund these efforts, and whatever benefit Iran may claim from sanctions relief pales in comparison to the danger it could pose with a nuclear weapon.

Moreover, there's no scenario where sanctions relief turns Iran into the region's dominant power. Iran's defense budget is eight times smaller than the combined budget of our Gulf allies. Their conventional capabilities will never compare with Israel's, and our commitment to

Israel's qualitative military edge helps guarantee that. Over the last several years, Iran has had to spend billions of dollars to support its only ally in the Arab world, Bashar al-Asad, even as he's lost control of huge chunks of his country. And Hizballah has suffered significant blows on this same battlefield. And Iran, like the rest of the region, is being forced to respond to the threat of ISIL in Iraq.

So, contrary to the alarmists who claim that Iran is on the brink of taking over the Middle East, or even the world, Iran will remain a regional power with its own set of challenges. The ruling regime is dangerous, and it is repressive. We will continue to have sanctions in place on Iran's support for terrorism and violation of human rights. We will continue to insist upon the release of Americans detained unjustly. We will have a lot of differences with the Iranian regime.

But if we're serious about confronting Iran's destabilizing activities, it is hard to imagine a worse approach than blocking this deal. Instead, we need to check the behavior that we're concerned about directly: by helping our allies in the region strengthen their own capabilities to counter a cyber attack or a ballistic missile, by improving the interdiction of weapons shipments that go to groups like Hizballah, by training our allies' special forces so that they can more effectively respond to situations like Yemen. All these capabilities will make a difference. We will be in a stronger position to implement them with this deal. And by the way, such a strategy also helps us effectively confront the immediate and lethal threat posed by ISIL.

Now, the final criticism—this is sort of a catch-all that you may hear—is the notion that there's a better deal to be had. "We should get a better deal." That's repeated over and over again. "This a bad deal, need a better deal"—[*laughter*]—one that relies on vague promises of toughness and, more recently, the argument that we can apply a broader and indefinite set of sanctions to squeeze the Iranian regime harder.

Those making this argument are either ignorant of Iranian society or they're just not being straight with the American people. Sanctions alone are not going to force Iran to completely dismantle all vestiges of its nuclear infrastructure, even those aspects that are consistent with peaceful programs. That oftentimes is what the critics are calling a better deal. Neither the Iranian Government or the Iranian opposition or the Iranian people would agree to what they would view as a total surrender of their sovereignty.

Moreover, our closest allies in Europe or in Asia—much less China or Russia—certainly are not going to agree to enforce existing sanctions for another 5, 10, 15 years according to the dictates of the U.S. Congress. Because their willingness to support sanctions in the first place was based on Iran ending its pursuit of nuclear weapons. It was not based on the belief that Iran cannot have peaceful nuclear power. And it certainly wasn't based on a desire for regime change in Iran.

As a result, those who say we can just walk away from this deal and maintain sanctions are selling a fantasy. Instead of strengthening our position, as some have suggested, Congress's rejection would almost certainly result in multilateral sanctions unraveling. If, as has also been suggested, we tried to maintain unilateral sanctions, beefing them up, we would be standing alone. We cannot dictate the foreign, economic, and energy policies of every major power in the world.

In order to even try to do that, we would have to sanction, for example, some of the world's largest banks. We'd have to cut off countries like China from the American financial system. And since they happen to be major purchasers of or our debt, such actions could trigger severe disruptions in our own economy and, by the way, raise questions internationally about the dollar's role as the world's reserve currency.

That's part of the reason why many of the previous unilateral sanctions were waived. What's more likely to happen, should Congress reject this deal, is that Iran would end up with some form of sanctions relief without having to accept any of the constraints or inspections required by this deal. So, in that sense, the critics

are right: Walk away from this agreement and you will get a better deal—for Iran. [*Laughter*]

Now, because more sanctions won't produce the results that the critics want, we have to be honest. Congressional rejection of this deal leaves any U.S. administration that is absolutely committed to preventing Iran from getting a nuclear weapon with one option: another war in the Middle East.

I say this not to be provocative. I am stating a fact. Without this deal, Iran will be in a position, however tough our rhetoric may be, to steadily advance its capabilities. Its breakout time, which is already fairly small, could shrink to near zero. Does anyone really doubt that the same voices now raised against this deal will be demanding that whoever is President bomb those nuclear facilities?

And as someone who does firmly believes that Iran must not get a nuclear weapon and who has wrestled with this issue since the beginning of my Presidency, I can tell you that alternatives to military action will have been exhausted once we reject a hard-won diplomatic solution that the world almost unanimously supports.

So let's not mince words. The choice we face is ultimately between diplomacy or some form of war, maybe not tomorrow, maybe not 3 months from now, but soon. And here's the irony. As I said before, military action would be far less effective than this deal in preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. That's not just my supposition. Every estimate, including those from Israeli analysts, suggest military action would only set back Iran's program by a few years at best, which is a fraction of the limitations imposed by this deal. It would likely guarantee that inspectors are kicked out of Iran. It is probable that it would drive Iran's program deeper underground. It would certainly destroy the international unity that we've spent so many years building.

Now, there are some opponents—I have to give them credit—there are opponents of this deal who accept the choice of war. In fact, they argue that surgical strikes against Iran's facilities will be quick and painless. But if we've learned anything from the last decade, it's that wars in general and wars in the Middle East in particular are anything but simple. The only certainty in war is human suffering, uncertain costs, unintended consequences. We can also be sure that the Americans who bear the heaviest burden are the less than 1 percent of us, the outstanding men and women who serve in uniform, and not those of us who send them to war.

As Commander in Chief, I have not shied away from using force when necessary. I have ordered tens of thousands of young Americans into combat. I have sat by their bedside sometimes when they come home. I've ordered military action in seven countries. There are times when force is necessary, and if Iran does not abide by this deal, it's possible that we don't have an alternative. But how can we in good conscience justify war before we've tested a diplomatic agreement that achieves our objectives, that has been agreed to by Iran, that is supported by the rest of the world, and that preserves our options if the deal falls short? How could we justify that to our troops? How could we justify that to the world or to future generations?

In the end, that should be a lesson that we've learned from over a decade of war. On the front end, ask tough questions. Subject our own assumptions to evidence and analysis. Resist the conventional wisdom and the drumbeat of war. Worry less about being labeled weak; worry more about getting it right.

I recognize that resorting to force may be tempting in the face of the rhetoric and behavior that emanates from parts of Iran. It is offensive. It is incendiary. We do take it seriously. But superpowers should not act impulsively in response to taunts or even provocations that can be addressed short of war. Just because Iranian hardliners chant "Death to America" does not mean that that's what all Iranians believe.

In fact, it's those hardliners who are most comfortable with the status quo. It's those hardliners chanting "Death to America" who have been most opposed to the deal. They're making common cause with the Republican caucus. [*Laughter*]

The majority of the Iranian people have powerful incentives to urge their Government to move in a different, less provocative direction, incentives that are strengthened by this deal. We should offer them that chance. We should give them that opportunity. It's not guaranteed to succeed. But if they take it, that would be good for Iran, it would be good for the United States, it would be good for a region that has known too much conflict, it would be good for the world.

And if Iran does not move in that direction, if Iran violates this deal, we will have ample ability to respond. The agreements pursued by Kennedy and Reagan with the Soviet Union, those agreements, those treaties involved America accepting significant constraints on our arsenal. As such, they were riskier. This agreement involves no such constraints. The defense budget of the United States is more than $600 billion. To repeat, Iran's is about $15 billion. Our military remains the ultimate backstop to any security agreement that we make. I have stated that Iran will never be allowed to obtain a nuclear weapon. I have done what is necessary to make sure our military options are real. And I have no doubt that any President who follows me will take the same position.

So let me sum up here. When we carefully examine the arguments against this deal, none of them stand up to scrutiny. That may be why the rhetoric on the other side is so strident. I suppose some of it can be ascribed to knee-jerk partisanship that has become all too familiar, rhetoric that renders every decision that's made a disaster, a surrender—"you're aiding terrorists; you're engendering—endangering freedom."

On the other hand, I do think it's important to acknowledge another, more understandable motivation behind the opposition to this deal or at least skepticism to this deal, and that is, a sincere affinity for our friend and ally Israel, an affinity that, as someone who has been a stalwart friend to Israel throughout my career, I deeply share.

When the Israeli Government is opposed to something, people in the United States take notice. And they should. No one can blame Israelis for having a deep skepticism about any dealings with a government like Iran's, which includes leaders who have denied the Holocaust, embrace an ideology of anti-Semitism, facilitate the flow of rockets that are arrayed on Israelis—Israel's borders, are pointed at Tel Aviv. In such a dangerous neighborhood, Israel has to be vigilant, and it rightly insists that it cannot depend on any other country—even its great friend the United States—for its own security. So we have to take seriously concerns in Israel.

But the fact is, partly due to American military and intelligence assistance, which my administration has provided at unprecedented levels, Israel can defend itself against any conventional danger, whether from Iran directly or from its proxies. On the other hand, a nuclear-armed Iran changes that equation.

And that's why this deal ultimately must be judged by what it achieves on the central goal of preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. This deal does exactly that. I say this as someone who has done more than any other President to strengthen Israel's security. And I have made clear to the Israeli Government that we are prepared to discuss how we can deepen that cooperation even further. Already, we've held talks with Israel on concluding another 10-year plan for U.S. security assistance to Israel. We can enhance support for areas like missile defense, information sharing, interdiction, all to help meet Israel's pressing security needs and to provide a hedge against any additional activities that Iran may engage in as a consequence of sanctions relief.

But I have also listened to the Israeli security establishment, which warned of the danger posed by a nuclear-armed Iran for decades. In fact, they helped develop many of the ideas that ultimately led to this deal. So, to friends of Israel and to the Israeli people I say this: A nuclear-armed Iran is far more dangerous to Israel, to America, and to the world than an Iran that benefits from sanctions relief.

I recognize that Prime Minister Netanyahu disagrees, disagrees strongly. I do not doubt his sincerity. But I believe he is wrong. I believe the facts support this deal. I believe they are in

America's interest and Israel's interest. And as President of the United States, it would be an abrogation of my constitutional duty to act against my best judgment simply because it causes temporary friction with a dear friend and ally. I do not believe that would be the right thing to do for the United States. I do not believe it would be the right thing to do for Israel.

Over the last couple weeks, I have repeatedly challenged anyone opposed to this deal to put forward a better, plausible alternative. I have yet to hear one. What I've heard instead are the same types of arguments that we heard in the runup to the Iraq war: Iran cannot be dealt with diplomatically; we can take military strikes without significant consequences; we shouldn't worry about what the rest of the world thinks, because once we act, everyone will fall in line; tougher talk, more military threats will force Iran into submission; we can get a better deal.

I know it's easy to play on people's fears, to magnify threats, to compare any attempt at diplomacy to Munich. But none of these arguments hold up. They didn't back in 2002 and 2003; they shouldn't now. The same mindset, in many cases offered by the same people, who seem to have no compunction with being repeatedly wrong—[*laughter*]—led to a war that did more to strengthen Iran, more to isolate the United States than anything we have done in the decades before or since. It's a mindset out of step with the traditions of American foreign policy, where we exhaust diplomacy before war and debate matters of war and peace in the cold light of truth.

"Peace is not the absence of conflict," President Reagan once said. It is "the ability to cope with conflict by peaceful means." President Kennedy warned Americans "not to see conflict as inevitable, accommodation as impossible, and communication as nothing more than the exchange of threats." It is time to apply such wisdom. The deal before us doesn't bet on Iran changing; it doesn't require trust. It verifies and requires Iran to forsake a nuclear weapon just as we struck agreements with the Soviet Union at a time when they were threatening our allies, arming proxies against us, proclaiming their commitment to destroy our way of life, and had nuclear weapons pointed at all of our major cities—a genuine existential threat.

We live in a complicated world, a world in which the forces unleashed by human innovation are creating opportunities for our children that were unimaginable for most of human history. It is also a world of persistent threats, a world in which mass violence and cruelty is all too common and human innovation risks the destruction of all that we hold dear. In this world, the United States of America remains the most powerful nation on Earth, and I believe that we will remain such for decades to come. But we are one nation among many.

And what separates us from the empires of old, what has made us exceptional, is not the mere fact of our military might. Since World War II, the deadliest war in human history, we have used our power to try to bind nations together in a system of international law. We have led an evolution of those human institutions President Kennedy spoke about: to prevent the spread of deadly weapons, to uphold peace and security, and promote human progress.

We now have the opportunity to build on that progress. We've built a coalition and held it together through sanctions and negotiations, and now we have before us a solution that prevents Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon without resorting to war. As Americans, we should be proud of this achievement. And as Members of Congress reflect on their pending decision, I urge them to set aside political concerns, shut out the noise, consider the stakes involved with the vote that you will cast.

If Congress kills this deal, we will lose more than just constraints on Iran's nuclear program or the sanctions we have painstakingly built. We will have lost something more precious: America's credibility as a leader of diplomacy, America's credibility as the anchor of the international system.

John F. Kennedy cautioned here, more than 50 years ago, at this university, that "the pursuit of peace is not as dramatic as the pursuit of

war." But it's so very important. It is surely the pursuit of peace that is most needed in this world so full of strife.

My fellow Americans, contact your representatives in Congress. Remind them of who we are. Remind them of what is best in us and what we stand for so that we can leave behind a world that is more secure and more peaceful for our children.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:58 a.m. in the School of International Service atrium at American University. In his remarks, he referred to former President George W. Bush; and President Bashar al-Asad of Syria. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks on the 50th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act
August 6, 2015

Thank you so much. Everybody, have a seat. Thank you.

First of all, I love John Lewis. And I don't know where he gets the energy—[*laughter*]—where he gets the drive, what stores of passion he's still able to muster after fighting the good fight for so long. I do know that many of us would not be here in this auditorium today had it not been for the heroism and dedication of Congressman John Lewis. So I'm so appreciative of him.

I'm proud to be joined by our Attorney General. Loretta Lynch has already shown herself to be a champion on behalf of not just the powerful, but the powerless, and is every single day, along with her team, fighting to make sure that we are all equal in the eyes of the law and that everybody is getting a fair shot. And so we are very grateful for her presence here today.

And I want to thank all of our partners, all the organizations, all the leadership from around the country that is represented in this auditorium, but also are listening over this live feed as we reaffirm our commitment to one of the most fundamental, sacred rights of any democracy, and that is the right to vote.

As John indicated, 50 years ago today, President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law to protect this precious right. It broke down legal barriers at the State level and at the local level that were keeping African Americans from exercising their constitutional right to vote. And all of us have a great debt to not just John Lewis, but the thousands—many of them unnamed—who were courageous enough to walk up and try to register time and time again, that were threatened because of their efforts to register: sharecroppers and maids and ordinary folks. Had it not been for them awakening the conscience of a nation, the President could not have mustered the political support that was required to ultimately get this seminal law passed.

We had the opportunity to honor some of the sacrifices that were made earlier this year in Selma, along with a hundred Members of Congress, Democratic and Republican Members. It was heartening to see the bipartisan attendance. It signified that in the abstract, at least, everybody today believes in the right to vote. [*Laughter*] Conceptually, everybody is in favor of the right to vote. [*Laughter*] You will not hear anybody defend the notion that the law can discriminate against persons because of their color or their faith or their ethnicity when it comes to going to cast a ballot. That's huge progress, a normative shift in how we think about our democracy. Everybody in theory is supposed to be included.

But part of the reason we're here today, part of the reason it's so important for us to focus attention on this right, is because in practice, we've still got problems.

On the ground, there are still too many ways in which people are discouraged from voting. Some of the protections that had been enshrined in the Voting Rights Act itself have been weakened as a consequence of court decisions and interpretations of the law. State legislatures have instituted procedures and practices that, although on the surface may appear neutral, have the effect of discouraging

people from voting, may have a disproportional effect on certain kinds of folks voting.

And if in fact those practices, those trends, those tendencies are allowed to continue unanswered, then over time, the hard-won battles of 50 years ago erode, and our democracy erodes. And that means that the decisions that are made in the corridors of power all across this country begin to reflect the interests of the few, instead of the interests of the many.

So we've got serious business to attend to here. One order of business is for our Congress to pass an updated version of the Voting Rights Act that would correct some of the problems that have arisen. And I said when I was in Selma that we're glad you're here, Members of Congress—[*laughter*]—but we'll be even more glad, we'll be in an even more celebratory mood, if you go back to Washington and reaffirm America's commitment to what was fought for here at this bridge.

Now, so far, that hasn't happened. John Lewis is ready to do it. There's legislation pending. There are people of good will on both sides of the aisle who are prepared to move it. But it keeps on slipping as a priority. Part of the reason we're here is to reaffirm to Members of Congress, this has to be a priority. If this isn't working, then nothing is working. We've got to get it done.

At the State levels, we've got some outstanding members of State legislatures—California, Florida—who have been championing mechanisms to get more people voting: Early voting, online registration. But sadly, too many States are making it harder for folks to vote, instituting photo ID laws that on the surface sound good. If you poll the average American, they'll say, yes, well, you should have to show your photo ID. But in practice, it turns out that for seniors and for poorer folks, that's not always easy to do. And by the way, it doesn't actually address a real problem—[*laughter*]—because there are almost no instances of people going to vote in somebody else's name. It's just not a—it turns out, it's just not a common crime. [*Laughter*]

Folks might think about shoplifting. Attorney General, you know more about the crime statistics than I do, but I am certain, because we've actually looked at the data on this, that almost nobody wakes up saying, I'm going to go vote in somebody else's name. [*Laughter*] Doesn't happen. So the only reason to pass this law, despite the reasonableness of how it sounds, is to make it harder for folks to vote.

You've got State legislatures that are rolling back early voting. I don't understand why anybody would be opposed to spreading out voting so that people can arrange to vote depending on their schedule. Because it's hard: If you are working the midnight shift and have got to get your kid to school and had to travel by bus and you're a single mom, it may be difficult for you to be able to vote precisely in that window that's provided. And there's no evidence that, as a consequence of early voting, that has increased fraud; that people somehow have become less committed to democracy; that they don't feel that same sense of civic pride as they do if there's just 1 day of voting. There's no evidence of that. The reason to roll back early voting is because you want to make it harder for folks to vote.

So, in theory, everybody is in favor of the right to vote. In practice, we have State legislatures that are deliberately trying to make it harder for people to vote.

And some of them, frankly, are not that shy about saying so. [*Laughter*] Think about that. Think about that. How can you rationalize making it harder for people to vote? How can you rationalize penalizing people because they don't have a lot of money not being able to vote? That's contrary to who we are. That's not what we believe. That's not what John Lewis fought for. In the United States of America, we should have no patience and no tolerance for laws that aim at disenfranchising our fellow citizens.

So we've got to keep pushing. At the Federal level, we need a new Voting Rights Act passed. At the State and local levels, we've got to fight back against efforts to make it harder to vote, and we've got to embrace those legislators that are prepared to make it easier to vote.

But there's one last aspect to this, and that is the job of citizens in actually exercising the franchise. This isn't always a popular thing to

say in front of progressive groups. Everybody is fired up and rightly so. But the reason that the voting rate in the last midterm election was 30-something percent is not attributable to a photo ID law. The fact of the matter is that far more people disenfranchise themselves than any law does by not participating, by not getting involved.

So yes, we have to be vigilant in pushing back against laws that seek to disenfranchise people. Yes, we should be fighting back against laws, for example, that say ex-felons, no matter how long they've been living a correct life, no matter how well they've paid their dues, that they can never vote again in that State. There are all kinds of battles we have to fight. But we miss the forest for the trees if we don't also recognize that huge chunks of us, citizens, just give away our power. We'd rather complain than do something about it. We won't vote, and then we'll talk about the terrible political process that isn't doing anything.

And I like barber shop talk. [*Laughter*] I like grumbling and complaining. I can't always do it in public. [*Laughter*] But what I know is, it doesn't get anything accomplished. So the groups that are here today, one of the things that we're looking forward to is how do we mobilize, how do we galvanize, how do we get people focused not only on laws, but also on our habits, our habits of citizenship? How do we instill in people a sense of why this is so critically important?

And that is why we are proclaiming September 22 National Voter Registration Day. September 22. And we're going to have groups fanning out all across the country. And on September 22, we're going to try to get everybody to register to vote. We probably won't get everybody—[*laughter*]—but we're going to try.

I want to thank so many of you who are involved in this—including the NAACP, which started their Journey to Justice, a march from Selma to Washington, earlier this week—because you're shining a light on this issue. And I want to make sure that we are fully mobilized across the country on September 22.

Bottom line is, everybody here has a part to play. Members of Congress need to do the right thing. State legislators and Governors, they need to do the right thing. Businesses, make it easier for your employees to vote. Do the right thing. Universities, other civic institutions: Help register people to vote, provide civic education. Do the right thing.

Most of all, citizens, seize the power that you have. Make this democracy work. Do not succumb to cynicism. Heroic things happen when people get involved. Heroic things happen when a young man without any official title joins up with a bunch of other young and not-so-young people of every color and every persuasion and are willing to march across a bridge. That's the power that is in all of us. We've got to take advantage of it.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:27 p.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

Remarks on Signing the Sawtooth National Recreation Area and Jerry Peak Wilderness Additions Act

August 7, 2015

Well, first of all, over the last 6 years, the American people have worked really hard to bounce back from the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. We got jobs numbers today, showing that America had created another 210,000 new jobs. That makes 65 consecutive months of private sector job growth. This is the strongest 2-year run of private sector job growth that we've seen in the last 15 years. And it is a testament, I think, to the incredible ingenuity and resilience and hard work of the American people.

So, even as we continue to focus on rebuilding our economy, providing more opportunity,

one of the things that we've also been trying to focus on is leaving a legacy for the next generation in preserving this incredible beauty, the God-given blessings, that we've received, those of us who have lived here in the United States of America.

I think everybody here knows that one of the prettiest States that we have, with some of the greatest national treasures, is the great State of Idaho. I am very proud to be able to sign this piece of legislation, enacted by the House of Representatives, entitled the Sawtooth National Recreation Area and the Jerry Peak Wilderness Additions Act. And what this does is, it designates three additional wilderness designations in the great State of Idaho.

This is a remarkable area. It is used by fishermen, hunters, rafters, people taking hikes. It is not only beautiful, but it's also an important economic engine for the State, attracting tourism and creating jobs. And thanks to the work of a broad-based coalition of folks in Idaho, but spearheaded here in Congress by Congressman Mike Simpson—who was able to receive not a single "no" vote—[*laughter*]—which does not happen often in the House of Representatives—something that folks have been working on for quite some time is going to be reality.

And so we want to congratulate all of them. We want to urge the American people to visit these new, incredible wilderness areas and recognize that not only will this give opportunities to people in Idaho, but it's going to be there for future generations as well.

One last point I want to make: We want to be thinking during the course of this summer about the firefighters who are taking on some really tough fires all across the Western States. As I've noted before, we've seen a consistent escalation of the severity and the length of wildfire season. And a lot of that is attributable to the fact that climate change is going to be raising temperatures and creating less water, more vulnerability for a lot of forests out there.

One of the things we're trying to work on with Congress is making sure that we are able to properly fund firefighting efforts, but also that we're engaged in the kind of conservation planning to ensure that we're preventing fires from happening in the first place.

And so that's a project that, at least in the Western States, you get a lot of bipartisan support for. And hopefully, we'll be able to get that same kind of support here in Washington.

So, again, congratulations to all of you. Mike, congratulations for the great work you've done.

I will now sign this designation.

[*At this point, the President signed the bill.*]

I'm getting a lot of practice doing this, but I want even more. [*Laughter*] There you go. Good job.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:05 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. H.R. 1138, approved August 7, was assigned Public Law No. 114–46.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Export Control Regulations
August 7, 2015

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice, stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13222 in light of the expiration of the Export Administration Act of 1979 is to

continue in effect for 1 year beyond August 17, 2015.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Weekly Address
August 8, 2015

Hi, everybody. The right to vote is one of the most fundamental rights of any democracy. Yet, for too long, too many of our fellow citizens were denied that right, simply because of the color of their skin.

Fifty years ago this week, President Lyndon Johnson signed a law to change that. The Voting Rights Act broke down legal barriers that stood between millions of African Americans and their constitutional right to cast a ballot. It was and still is one of the greatest victories in our country's struggle for civil rights.

But it didn't happen overnight. Countless men and women marched and organized, sat in and stood up, for our most basic rights. For this they were called agitators and un-American; they were jailed, and they were beaten. Some were even killed. But in the end, they reaffirmed the idea at the very heart of America: that people who love this country can change it.

Our country is a better place because of all those heroes did for us. But as one of those heroes, Congressman John Lewis, reminded us in Selma this past March, "There is still work to be done." Fifty years after the Voting Rights Act, there are still too many barriers to vote and too many people trying to erect new ones. We've seen laws that roll back early voting, force people to jump through hoops to cast a ballot, or lead to legitimate voters being improperly purged from the rolls. Over the years, we've seen provisions specifically designed to make it harder for some of our fellow citizens to vote. In a democracy like ours, with a history like ours, that's a disgrace.

That's why, as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, I'm calling on Congress to pass new legislation to make sure every American has equal access to the polls. It's why I support the organizers getting folks registered in their communities. And it's why, no matter what party you support, my message to every American is simple: Get out there and vote, not just every 4 years, but every chance you get. Because your elected officials will only heed your voice if you make your voice heard.

The promise that all of us are created equal is written into our founding documents, but it's up to us to make that promise real. Together, let's do what Americans have always done: Let's keep marching forward, keep perfecting our Union, and keep building a better country for our kids.

Thanks, everybody. Have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 11:30 a.m. on August 7 in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House for broadcast on August 8. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 7, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 8.

Statement on the Health of Former President Jimmy Carter
August 12, 2015

Michelle and I send our best wishes to President Carter for a fast and full recovery. Our thoughts and prayers are with Rosalynn and the entire Carter family as they face this challenge with the same grace and determination that they have shown so many times before. Jimmy,

you're as resilient as they come, and along with the rest of America, we are rooting for you.

NOTE: The statement referred to former First Lady Rosalynn Smith Carter.

The President's Weekly Address
August 15, 2015

Hi, everybody. It's now been a year since the tragic death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. His death—along with the events in Cleveland, Staten Island, Baltimore, Cincinnati, and other communities—sparked protests and soul searching all across our country. Over the past year, we've come to see, more clearly than ever, the frustration in many communities of color and the feeling that our laws can be applied unevenly.

After Ferguson, I said that we have to face these issues squarely. I convened a Task Force on community policing to find commonsense steps that can help us drive down crime and build up trust and cooperation between communities and police, who put their lives on the line every single day to help keep us safe. And I've met personally with rank and file officers to hear their ideas.

In May, this Task Force made up of police officers, activists, and academics proposed 59 recommendations: everything from how we can make better use of data and technology, to how we train police officers, to how law enforcement engages with our schools. And we've been working with communities across America to put these ideas into action.

Dozens of police departments are now sharing more data with the public, including on citations, stops and searches, and shootings involving law enforcement. We've brought together leaders from across the country to explore alternatives to incarceration. The Justice Department has begun pilot programs to help police use body cameras and collect data on the use of force. This fall, the Department will award more than $160 million in grants to support law enforcement and community organizations that are working to improve policing. And all across the country—from States like Illinois and Ohio, to cities like Philadelphia, Boston, and Nashville—local leaders are working to implement the Task Force recommendations in a way that works for their communities.

So we've made progress. And we'll keep at it. But let's be clear: The issues raised over the past year aren't new, and they won't be solved by policing alone. We simply can't ask our police to contain and control issues that the rest of us aren't willing to address as a society. That starts with reforming a criminal justice system that too often is a pipeline from inadequate schools to overcrowded jails, wreaking havoc on communities and families all across the country. So we need Congress to reform our Federal sentencing laws for nonviolent drug offenders. We need to keep working to help more prisoners take steps to turn their lives around so they can contribute to their communities after they've served their time.

More broadly, we need to truly invest in our children and our communities so that more young people see a better path for their lives. That means investing in early childhood education, job training, pathways to college. It means dealing honestly with issues of race, poverty, and class that leave too many communities feeling isolated and segregated from greater opportunity. It means expanding that opportunity to every American willing to work for it, no matter what ZIP Code they were born into.

Because, in the end, that's always been the promise of America. And that's what I'll keep working for every single day that I'm President. Thanks, everybody, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 11:10 a.m. on August 7 in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House for broadcast on August 15. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 14, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 15.

Statement on the Death of H. Julian Bond
August 16, 2015

Julian Bond was a hero and, I'm privileged to say, a friend. Justice and equality was the mission that spanned his life: from his leadership of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, to his founding role with the Southern Poverty Law Center, to his pioneering service in the Georgia legislature and his steady hand at the helm of the NAACP. Michelle and I have benefited from his example, his counsel, and his friendship, and we offer our prayers and sympathies to his wife Pamela and his children.

Julian Bond helped change this country for the better. And what better way to be remembered than that.

NOTE: The statement referred to Pamela S. Horowitz, wife, and Horace M. Bond II, Jeffrey A. Bond, Michael J. Bond, Phyllis J. Bond McMillan, and Julia L. Bond, children, of Mr. Bond.

Statement on the Death of Emma Didlake
August 17, 2015

Emma Didlake served her country with distinction and honor, a true trailblazer for generations of Americans who have sacrificed so much for their country. I was humbled and grateful to welcome Emma to the White House last month, and Michelle and I send our deepest condolences to Emma's family, friends, and everyone she inspired over her long and quintessentially American life.

Statement on the Death of Former Representative Louis Stokes
August 19, 2015

Michelle and I were saddened to learn of the passing of former Congressman Louis Stokes. As a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus and the first African American to represent the State of Ohio in Congress, Lou believed deeply in fairness and the idea that every American should have the same opportunity to succeed. Growing up in Depression-era Cleveland with his mother and brother Carl, Lou triumphed over hardship to become a passionate voice for those less fortunate. He fought to expand access to quality health care in struggling communities and worked tirelessly on behalf of hard-working Ohioans. Lou leaves behind an indelible legacy in the countless generations of young leaders that he inspired, and he will be sorely missed. Michelle and I send our condolences to his wife Jay and the family and friends who loved him so dearly.

The President's Weekly Address
August 22, 2015

Hi, everybody. Seven years after the worst economic crisis in generations, our economy continues to grow and create jobs. In fact, our businesses have created 13 million new jobs over the past 5½ years.

But if we want to keep this momentum going, to make sure that working families feel like their hard work is being rewarded with a basic sense of security, then we all need to do our part.

That's why my administration has been partnering with States and cities to help grow the middle class. Over the past few years, nearly 20 cities and counties have implemented paid sick

days. Six States have enacted paid sick days or paid family leave. Seventeen States, and more than two dozen cities and counties, have raised their minimum wage. All of this will help working families. And across the country, folks are proving that preparing all our kids for the future doesn't have to be a partisan issue. Seattle, a city with a Democratic mayor, just passed universal pre-K, while Indianapolis, a city with a Republican mayor, is starting citywide preschool scholarships. All told, 34 States have increased funding for preschool, and that's good for all of us.

Now we need Congress to do its part to boost the economy as well. Unfortunately, Congress left town for 5 full weeks, and they left behind a stack of unfinished business. For the first time ever, Congress failed to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank. That left thousands of business owners and their employees at a serious disadvantage compared to their competitors overseas. That's not good for jobs. It's not good for our economy. When it returns from recess, reauthorizing the Bank ought to be a top agenda for Members of Congress.

Congress also hasn't passed a budget, and when they return from vacation, they'll only have a few weeks to do so or shut down the Government for the second time in 2 years. They've had all year to do this. Months ago, I put forward a detailed plan to strengthen our economy and our national security in a fiscally responsible way. And for months, I've said I will veto any budget that locks in the sequester, those senseless cuts to domestic and national security priorities. Remember, we can't cut our way to prosperity. We should be investing in things that help our economy grow today and tomorrow, like education or infrastructure or scientific research.

Democrats in Congress have made it clear they're ready to sit down and work with Republicans to find common ground on this. After all, Americans expect Congress to help keep our country strong and growing, not threaten to shut down our Government. When Congress gets back, they should prevent a shutdown, pass a responsible budget, and prove that this is a country that looks forward, a country that invests in our future and keeps our economy growing for all Americans.

Thanks, everybody, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 11:15 a.m. on August 7 in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House for broadcast on August 22. In the address, the President referred to Mayor Edward B. Murray of Seattle, WA; and Mayor Gregory A. Ballard of Indianapolis, IN. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 21, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 22.

Remarks at the National Clean Energy Summit in Las Vegas, Nevada
August 24, 2015

Thank you, everybody. Please, please, have a seat. We're all about saving energy here. [*Laughter*] Sit down. [*Laughter*]

Hello, Las Vegas! It's good to be back on the road after spending a little downtime with my family, recharging my own batteries, so to speak. And it is great to join you at this Clean Energy Summit to see the work that you're all doing on what I consider to be one of the most important issues not just of our time, but of any time.

I want to thank Mandalay Bay, MGM's chairman, Jim Murren, for hosting us today. I want to thank my dear friend, your outstanding Senator, Harry Reid, for holding this summit and for keeping us focused on this challenge. I want to thank him, by the way, for his strong statement over the weekend in support of a deal that is going to make sure that Iran does not get a nuclear weapon, which is a top priority of my administration. And Harry's leadership matters. It sends a message that Congress should support this historic diplomatic breakthrough, and not block it over the objections of most of the world. It reflects the best of American foreign policy. We don't rely on bluster or

bravado; we focus on strong, principled diplomacy that prevents Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon—and showing once again to the entire world what American leadership really means.

Now, we're here today because we believe that no challenge poses a greater threat to our future than climate change. It's something that I've spoken at length about a few weeks ago; it's something that I'll speak about at length next week when I travel throughout Alaska.

But we're also here because we hold another belief, and that is, we are deeply optimistic about American ingenuity. We think we can do good and do well at the same time. We believe we have the power, the dynamism, the creativity to solve a big problem while keeping the engines of the American economy moving.

Six and a half years ago, I took office after decades in which our addiction to fossil fuels and foreign oil perennially threatened our planet and our national security. And together, we've begun to change that, a lot of people in this room working with us. Yes, we've become the world's number-one producer of oil and natural gas, but we've also become a major player in clean energy. And these advances have helped to grow our economy and created a steady stream of well-paying jobs. They've also helped us reduce the dangerous emissions that contribute to climate change. And we've done it in three big ways.

First of all, we're wasting less energy. We've set new fuel economy standards on cars and trucks, new efficiency standards on appliances like refrigerators and dishwashers, and these advances are already saving folks money at the pump. It's saving money on their electricity bills. And steps like these also mean that factories and businesses aren't just paying for energy, they're getting paid not to waste energy. The economy as a whole is producing a lot more using less energy. And we're also using less dirty energy.

Earlier this month, I unveiled our Clean Power Plan, the first set of nationwide standards to end the limitless dumping of carbon pollution from our power plants, the single most important step America has ever taken to combat climate change. Now, the Clean Power Plan is also going to accelerate the third way that we're cutting emissions, creating jobs, saving folks money, and that's by generating more clean energy.

When I took office, I pledged to double our production of wind and solar by the end of my first term. We've met that goal ahead of schedule. As Harry just mentioned, 6 years ago, the Recovery Act marked the single biggest investment in clean energy in our history. And by the way, what we did was not revolutionary. We did what the Federal Government has always done: We invested in promising new technologies to spur private sector investment and innovation all across the country.

Today, there are thousands of renewable energy projects employing tens of thousands of Americans all across the country. Right here in Nevada, for example, renewable energy generation has increased 180 percent since I took office. Today, America is number one in wind power, generating three times as much wind energy as we did in 2008. There are now more than 500 wind manufacturers across 43 States supplying the wind industry, an industry that supports more than 50,000 jobs and supplies enough energy to power 16 million homes.

Some States have made even greater strides. Last year, for example, Iowa generated nearly 30 percent of its electricity from the wind. And if we keep investing in wind, rather than making shortsighted cuts or chasing mindless austerity, wind could provide as much as 35 percent of America's electricity and supply renewable power in all 50 States by the year 2050.

As well as we're doing in wind, we're making even more progress on solar. I notice you've got a lot of sun around here. [*Laughter*] America generates 20 times as much solar power as we did in 2008—20 times. Last year was solar's biggest year ever. Prices fell by 10 percent; installations climbed by 30 percent. Every 3 minutes, another home or business in America goes solar. Every 3 weeks, we installed as much solar capacity as we did in all of 2008. And the world's largest solar installation came online last year, with 9 million solar panels generating enough electricity to power more than a hun-

dred thousand homes with clean, renewable energy, not in Germany, not in China, not in Saudi Arabia, right here in the United States of America.

In fact, over the past 6 years, the Federal Government has approved 34 commercial-scale solar projects and the transmission infrastructure that goes with them on public lands across the West. We approved one new project just today in California that will ultimately power another 100,000-plus homes. And right here in Las Vegas, we've cut the time it takes to permit solar projects in half.

And one of the reasons we've done this is not just because it's good for the environment and good for the overall economy; it takes workers to install all this new capacity. And that's why, last year, the solar industry added jobs 10 times faster than the rest of the economy. Solar has helped a lot of construction workers find work while Congress was dragging its feet on funding infrastructure projects. In fact, the solar industry now employs twice as many Americans as mining coal. We're helping more veterans find work with our Solar Ready Vets program, with a goal of training 75,000 solar workers who have been veterans by 2020. That is a goal we can achieve.

So Federal investments have helped support all this innovation, and now is not the time to pull back on those investments. Now is not the time to insist on massive cuts to the investments in R&D that help drive our economy, including the hundreds of millions of dollars in cuts that many Republicans want to take from these successful, job-creating clean energy programs. It's thanks in part to these investments that there are already places across the country where clean power from the sun is finally cheaper than conventional power from your utility, power often generated by burning coal or gas.

And it's impossible to overstate what this means. For decades, we've been told that it doesn't make economic sense to switch to renewable energy. Today, that's no longer true. And you don't have to take my word for it. Many of our biggest businesses are backing up that fact. Walmart has the most installed onsite solar capacity of any company in America. They're not in the business of giving away money. [*Laughter*] Google is the largest corporate buyer of renewable energy in the world, companies like Apple and Costco close behind. They're not doing this just out of altruism. They're doing it because it means big cost savings. And that can mean big things for local communities.

I'll just give you one example. Google plans to retrofit the site of a retired coal plant in Alabama into a data hub run entirely on renewable energy. Recently, they created a new online tool that lets you plug in your address to see if solar power is the smart choice for you.

So, if you care about climate change, the very fact that companies realize clean energy and energy efficiency are not only cost-effective, but cost-saving, should give you a big jolt of hope.

The point is, America is making incredible progress on this issue. And that's one of the reasons why I recently committed this country to getting 20 percent of our energy from renewables beyond hydroelectric power by 2030. And by the way, when we do smart things in America, that wakes up the world. So Brazil's President joined me for that announcement, committed her country to the same goal. But to meet that goal, we have to triple where we are today. So I'm here to give you hope, but not complacency.

The private sector is increasingly all in. Cities and States are increasingly doing their part. Just today 15 cities, from Seattle to Chicago to New York, are joining 19 cities that have already pledged to reduce emissions and invest in climate resilience. Leaders in California are aiming to generate 50 percent of their electricity from renewables by 2030—50 percent—while cutting carbon pollution from oil by 50 percent.

And as long as I'm President, the Federal Government is going to do its part beyond the investments that we've already made to promote this issue. So, last month, we announced a new initiative to make it easier for businesses and low-income households to install low-cost solar. Today we're announcing new public and

private sector commitments that will add new solar capacity on more than 40 military bases. And that's an investment that will create jobs, save taxpayer dollars, and reduce emissions.

The Department of Energy is announcing a new push to deploy innovative distributed energy resources like microgrids or rooftop solar with battery storage and will offer loan guarantees for projects like these. And we're going to make it even easier for individual homeowners to put solar panels on their roof with no upfront cost. So, specifically, we're going to take steps to expand the use of a tool we call PACE, which helps you pay for solar panels through the future savings on your energy bills.

So we're taking steps that allow more Americans to join this revolution with no money down. You don't have to share my passion for fighting climate change. A lot of Americans are going solar and becoming more energy efficient not because they're tree huggers, although, trees are important—[*laughter*]—just want you to know—[*laughter*]—but because they're cost cutters. They like saving money. And I'm all for consumers saving money, because that means they can spend it on other stuff. Solar isn't just for the green crowd anymore, it's for the green eyeshade crowd too. [*Laughter*]

Now, we've still got a lot of work to do, and significant obstacles remain. And obviously, all of you know that very well. For all the promise of solar, it's still a small share of our economy mix—energy mix, less than 1 percent. Wind makes up almost 5 percent. But here's the thing: Solar made up almost one-third of all new generating capacity last year. Wind power made up another 20 percent. So we see the trend lines. We see where technology is taking us. We see where consumers want to go. And that, let's be honest, has some big fossil fuel interests pretty nervous, to the point where they're trying to fight renewable energy.

Now, it's one thing if you're consistent in being free market. It's another thing when you're free market until it's solar that's working and people want to buy, and suddenly, you're not for it anymore. [*Laughter*] That's a problem.

There's a big shift going underway that goes beyond simply putting solar panels on your home. Yes, the number of homes with rooftop solar has grown from fewer than 20,000 to about 600,000 over the past decade or so. More than 80 percent of that capacity was added in the past 4 years. But the real revolution going on here is that people are beginning to realize, they can take more control over their own energy: what they use, how much, when.

For decades, our energy system basically worked one way. Utilities generated power, usually by burning fossil fuels. They ran lines into the home or business. We paid for it. It wasn't a real exciting business; there wasn't a lot of innovation. We didn't think about it much in our daily lives, until the energy bill came in the mail. And the economy grew under that model, at a time when we were less worried about dependence on foreign fuels and at a time when we were less conscious about the impacts it was having on the environment.

But in just a few short years, that's begun to change in a profound way. Six years ago, smart meters were pretty rare. Today, 60 million consumers have access to detailed information about how much energy we use, how we use it, when we use it. So we can use that information to change our habits, use energy more efficiently, save more money without a whole lot of sacrifice. We can control our thermostats from our smartphones. New appliances and smart devices can tell when energy prices are cheapest and do laundry or wash the dishes or charge our car at those times.

We've got windows and building materials that can actually generate power. And we can even tell our utility company that we want our homes powered by renewable energy, or we can call up a contractor and put solar panels on our roof by the weekend, and that empowers us not only to generate affordable clean energy, but to store it in battery packs or sell it back to the grid.

And that's power. That's the future. That's happening right now. It's an American energy revolution that's like evolving from the telegraph to the smartphone in less than a decade. It's happening fast.

Now, the good news is, some utilities recognize this; they see what's happening. They're adapting their business model to seize the opportunities of this emerging energy reality. And we have to lift up some of those success stories and the innovations that are taking place.

So San Antonio's municipal utility is standing up its own rooftop solar program. Southern Company is partnering with Nest and Tesla on power storage so we can use renewable energy better. Oklahoma Gas and Electric is empowering its customers to enroll in smart metering that uses electricity when it's cheaper, not when it's most expensive.

But while change this fast presents new opportunities, it is invariably going to create resistance from some fossil fuel interests who want to protect the old, outdated status quo. And there are some legitimate issues around how does a new distributed system work and folks have sunk costs and how do we deal with those things, and those are important for us to address. But when you start seeing massive lobbying efforts backed by fossil fuel interests or conservative think tanks or the Koch brothers pushing for new laws to roll back renewable energy standards or prevent new clean energy businesses from succeeding, that's a problem. That's not the American way. That's not progress. That's not innovation. That's rent-seeking and trying to protect old ways of doing business and standing in the way of the future.

I mean, think about this. Ordinarily, these are groups that tout themselves as champions of the free market. If you start talking to them about providing health care for folks who don't have health insurance, they're going crazy: This is socialism; this is going to destroy America. But in this situation, they're trying to undermine competition in the marketplace and choke off consumer choice and threaten an industry that's churning out new jobs at a fast pace. And that has the potential to hurt a lot of communities and set back America's leadership in fighting climate change. They're even fighting to protect billions of dollars of taxpayer dollars in corporate welfare each year that's going to fossil fuel companies.

Now, what's interesting is that their actions have conjured up some pretty strange bedfellows. In some States, we've got Green Party and Tea Party teaming up to protect our freedom to choose clean energy. It is rare that the Tea Party leaders and I are on the same side of an issue. [*Laughter*] I agree with them here. And just because I agree with them, I don't want them to change their minds now. [*Laughter*] I promise, there are all kinds of other things you can whoop me. [*Laughter*]

But this is important, and they are absolutely right on this fight. This is not, and should not be, a Republican versus Democratic issue. This should be an issue that can bring everybody together. If you're a progressive, you should care about this. If you're a libertarian, you should care about this. If you just want to save some money, you should care about it. And if you care about the future of our children and grandchildren, you should care about it.

So, here and across the country, this is about whether big polluters control the system, or whether consumers have freedom to choose cleaner, cheaper, more efficient energy; whether we protect old ways of doing business even when they're not efficient, or we dream up new business models that bring new technologies into our homes and businesses and new jobs into our communities. This is about the past versus the future. And America believes in the future.

And to make that future a reality, we've got to have everybody—utilities, entrepreneurs, workers, businesses, consumers, energy regulators, tree huggers, Tea Partiers—everybody has got to seize the opportunities before us.

There is something big happening in America right now. For the first time, we can actually see what our clean energy future looks like. And yes, the closer we get to this future, opposition will fight even harder to keep things the way they've been. Folks will get louder in some of that backlash, and they'll put out press releases suggesting that somehow this is bad for America. We can't pay attention to that. Folks whose interests or ideologies run counter to where we need to go, we've got to be able to

politely, but firmly say, sorry, we're moving forward.

And anybody who suggests that moving to a clean energy economy is going to somehow cripple our economy or lead to fewer jobs, if they hold up snowballs in February—[*laughter*]—as if that somehow disproves decades of scientific data, if they suggest that we've got to set our sights lower and do less or delay action because we can't figure this stuff out, I just want everybody to remember, we've heard these arguments before. We have engaged in this debate many times before. It's taken different forms, but this is a age-old debate in America. It's a debate between the folks who say, "No, we can't," and the folks who say, "Yes, we can." Because those—between those who fear the future and those who are eager to seize the future.

And although sometimes, it—there are some growing pains, America always comes down on the side of the future. We've always been a people who reach—proudly and boldly and unafraid—to that more promising future. We refuse to surrender the hope of a clean energy future to those who fear it and fight it and sometimes provide misinformation about it.

Because the naysayers always underestimate what the American people are capable of. And we prove that every day. All across this country right now, you've got once-dusty plains and rundown buildings that are now solar fields and rooftop arrays. All across this country right now, once-shuttered factories are humming, retraining workers to build wind turbines, technology that we're importing—we're not just importing now, now we're making it here, and we're exporting it: technology made in America. All across this country, once-darkened plants are now full of rehired autoworkers manufacturing some of the world's most energy-efficient cars, cars that make you proud to be an American.

This generation of Americans is hammering into place the high-tech foundations of a clean energy age. It's the same people who first harnessed the power of the atom, the power of the sun; the same spirit of people who connected the continent by road and by rail, who connected the world through our science and our imaginations; the same people who set foot on the Moon and put a rover on Mars and probes the farthest reaches of our solar system.

That's what Americans do. We can do anything. And you guys are proving it every single day, and I'm going to be right there beside you. Congratulations.

God bless you. God bless this country we love. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:12 p.m. at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to President Dilma Vana Rousseff of Brazil; Charles G. Koch, chief executive officer and chairman of the board, and David H. Koch, executive vice president, Koch Industries, Inc. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 25.

Remarks at a Nevada State Democratic Party Fundraiser in Henderson, Nevada

August 24, 2015

Hey! Thank you, everybody. Thank you so much. Thank you. Everybody, have a seat. Have a seat. Come on. We're among friends here. Thank you so much. Let me begin by thanking Brian and Myra for their hospitality in this humble abode. [*Laughter*] The last time I saw Brian, I have to admit that he and Derek Jeter stole money from me—[*laughter*]—at Shadow Creek.

And it was clearly a setup, because as we got—I knew Derek, but I hadn't played golf with him before, and as we got up to the practice range, he was shanking balls everywhere. And I said, "Well, do you play golf, Derek?" He said, "I just started 2 weeks ago." [*Laughter*] And Brian said, "Yes, I'll be his partner," because Brian is a better golfer than me. And we gave Derek Jeter, like, 30 strokes. And

then, on the first tee, suddenly, the ball just went straight and down the middle of the fairway, and we had to take a picture of me handing Derek Jeter money at the end of it.

So, despite that, Brian is a great friend and obviously an incredible leader in this community and nationally. And I could not be more grateful to him and Myra for hosting us here today. So please give them a big round of applause.

It's hard for me to express how much I love Harry Reid, but it's easier to do it in a room of people who love Harry Reid. Harry and I drove over here together, and we were doing a little reminiscing and then figuring out how we're going to deal with the crazies in terms of managing some problems. And then we talked about riding off into the sunset together.

Everything I've accomplished, I've accomplished because Harry Reid was there by my side. And I am forever grateful for his friendship and his strength, because the thing about Harry is, he's a great politician, but he's also a man with a lot of backbone and is willing to do hard things when it's required, and that's what you want out of a political leader.

That's part of the reason why Harry has made me so confident about Catherine and her capacity to do a great job in the United States Senate. Catherine Cortez Masto has already shown her leadership in this State. She has been a tireless advocate on behalf of children, on behalf of women, on behalf of folks who are vulnerable to fraud. She's the kind of person with the track record of integrity and fighting for people on the right side of the issues that you want in the United States Senate. And I think this will be a lasting part of what is already an incredible legacy of leadership in the United States Senate as Harry passes the torch on to Catherine. So we are thrilled that she has agreed to take on what is going to be always a tough fight. I don't know that there are ever any easier—easy fights around here, but I have full confidence that not only is she going to be a great candidate, but more importantly, she's going to be a great Senator.

And then, I've just got a lot of friends in the room, so—you know who you are. Hey, friends. It is wonderful to be back in Vegas, wonderful to be back in Nevada.

I'm coming off a couple of weeks of family time. I feel refreshed, renewed, recharged, a little feisty—[*laughter*]—and ready to roll up my sleeves and get to work, because we still have a lot of work facing this country.

When I came into office, obviously, we had enormous challenges, almost unprecedented challenges. And systematically, we have dug ourselves out of the economic hole that we were in. Nevada was as hard hit as any State in the Union, and Nevada has bounced back. Still got a lot of work to do. But the economy is stronger; the housing market is stronger. People are seeing job creation once again. But what we also know is that the potential of America is so much greater than what is currently being realized, and part of the reason is because we've got a political system that's holding us back.

Right now we could be putting hundreds of thousands of people back to work rebuilding the infrastructure of this country, and yet we have a Congress that finances our highway bill for 3 months at a time. That's not what the greatest country on Earth does. That's not how the Hoover Dam was built. That's not how the Interstate Highway or the transcontinental railroad were built. That's not how we sent a man to the Moon or invented the Internet, by failing to invest in our future.

I just came back from a conference that Harry organized today about clean energy. When we came into office in 2008, one of our top priorities was to kickstart what was still a fairly nascent clean energy industry. We're now producing more solar energy in 1 year than we did in 8 or 10 years before I came into office. We've increased solar power by twentyfold, increased wind power by three, four times. And yet you've got a budget in Washington right now that's being structured that would rob us of the investments we need to innovate and move us in the direction of a clean energy future that also will happen to save the planet, a pretty good byproduct of the work that's already being done by the private sector and public sector all across the country.

We know that our kids are going to have to be trained for a new knowledge economy. And yet, unfortunately, we are still having debates about whether we should be making investments in K–12 education, whether we should make our community colleges more affordable for more people, whether we should be properly funding job training programs to make sure that every worker out there is trained for the jobs of the future as opposed to simply longing for the jobs of the past.

So, across the board, we have incredible opportunities. And I have never been more optimistic about America than I am right now. You'll recall that it was probably just a year, year and a half ago, where everybody was talking about China taking over. Let me tell you something: I spend a lot of time overseas, and around the world, if you ask people who's got the best cards, who's got the combination of the best universities and colleges, the best scientists, the best entrepreneurs, the best innovators, the most dynamic workforce—in part because we have the best tradition of immigration and attracting the best and brightest from around the world—people will say the United States of America. They envy us. But what's holding us back is too often our political debates are not about what's best for the country, but what's best for the next election.

And what's true here domestically is also true in terms of foreign policy. I mean, we've got enormous challenges around the world. But the fact is, is that since I came into office, not only have we been able to wind down two wars, take out bin Laden, but often without fanfare, we've saved millions of lives because of initiatives to stop malaria. We've provided billions dollars of new initiatives to help develop the poorest countries in the world. We're promoting the education of girls and women all around the world and championing human rights each and every day. We've been leaders in nonproliferation, which is part of the reason why I am so insistent that Congress not block a historic diplomatic effort when it comes to making sure that Iran does not get a nuclear weapon. And I'm so appreciative of Harry Reid's support for that effort.

And part of what we have to recognize is, is that in the same way that we can't let politics get in the way of our growth and prosperity here at home, the world is counting on us for leadership around the world. I've said this before: When there's a problem someplace, the first call isn't to Berlin, isn't to Beijing. The first call isn't to Moscow. The first call is to Washington, to the United States of America. If there is a hurricane somewhere, if there is an earthquake someplace, if there is a crisis that needs to be addressed, people understand that we have to lead.

And the fact is, is that we have led and can continue to lead. But in order for us to do so, we're going to need not just a strong executive branch, not just a President who after a few gray hairs seems to know what he's doing, but we also need a Congress that works, that functions. And listen, the happiest person on Earth that I cannot run for a third term is Michelle Obama. [*Laughter*] And so we're going to be observing, to some degree, what takes place in the election to come.

But what I can say is this. Democrats are not perfect. There are times where we have disagreements within the party. There are some folks in our party who sometimes are dogmatic. But Democrats govern. Democrats are willing to do things that are hard. Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi had been willing to stand up for what's right, even when it's not popular. And that, more than anything, is what America needs right now. And so you being here tonight indicates that you believe in that kind of leadership.

And I would just urge you, especially those who were actively involved in my campaign back in 2008, we need you even more involved now because the stakes are so high, from education to infrastructure, to climate change, to clean energy, to making sure that we fight terrorism and the threats against this country, but we do it in a way that is lawful and in a way that is respectful to our values. The stakes are enormous. And your participation, your willingness to stand up for the America I think we all believe in, that's what's going to make a difference.

So thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:04 p.m. at the residence of Brian and Myra Greenspun. In his remarks, he referred to Derek S. Jeter, former shortstop, Major League Baseball's New York Yankees. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 25. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Honoring the 2014 Women's National Basketball Association Champion Phoenix Mercury
August 26, 2015

The President. Hello, everybody. Well, welcome to the White House. Congratulations to the 2014 WNBA Champion, Phoenix Mercury! And I want to acknowledge WNBA President Laurel Richie—Laurel—and WNBA Coach of the Year Sandy Brondello. [*Applause*] Yay!

I would be happy to be here, except that the Mercury getting here involved beating the Chicago Sky in the finals. [*Laughter*] In fact, Diana, backstage, was trash-talking me. [*Laughter*] You have kept yet another Chicago sports team from getting into the White House. [*Laughter*] But there's always next year.

It's been a while since the Mercury last visited here 5 years ago. And in that time, this team has appeared in four more Western Conference Finals. Last year, they cracked the code again. Last season, the Mercury set a WNBA record with 29 regular season wins. And obviously, their fans had their backs; Phoenix had the highest attendance rate in the league.

In the Western Conference finals, they got some payback against their archrivals, the Minnesota Lynx, and set themselves up for the championship. But it was not always easy. Brittney Griner had a breakout season; we expected that after having seen her at Baylor. And she was tearing it up in the playoffs before going down with an injury in the finals. So, in the clinching game, the rest of the team had to step up. And so Diana Taurasi was good for 24 points; she apparently can shoot the ball pretty good. [*Laughter*] With less than a minute to go, the game tied at 82, she put the Mercury ahead for good. As Coach Brondello says about Diana, "When you put the ball in her hands, in the money, crunch time, she makes things happen."

So these are some outstanding basketball players—Diana and Brittney, but also Candice Dupree, DeWanna Bonner, Erin Phillips, and Penny Taylor, who sealed the championship with two clutch free throws. Penny said that: "Nobody is left out of anything on the Mercury. Everybody has to listen, everybody is involved, one through 11."

And that sense of teamwork extends to the work that they're doing in the Phoenix community as well. These women have spent more than 150 hours cleaning up courts and running basketball clinics for underserved kids and working with high school basketball teams that they adopt every year. And during the playoffs——

[*At this point, a baby cried.*]

The President. That's okay, it's an excited fan. [*Laughter*] And during the playoffs, the Mercury raised awareness for the national bone marrow donor registry by enlisting an honorary assistant coach named Mia McPoland, a 12-year-old who's waiting and hoping to find a donor.

So this is a team that I think is representative of what the WNBA is all about. They're doing good in their community. They're great athletes. They and women across the WNBA are changing the way that young girls, including my daughters, see themselves. And as a dad, I've witnessed the shift just in the last 10 years, 15 years, 20 years, in terms of it just being taken for granted that women are great athletes and great leaders. And that does not happen unless these outstanding women perform the way they do. Plus, they look so good. [*Laughter*] You know? They clean up pretty good.

And so I am very pleased to congratulate this outstanding team behind me, not only for winning a championship, but for being great representatives of not only the WNBA, but of basketball as a whole.

And with that, I think Diana has a few words that she's going to say. And I just want to warn—last year, somebody slipped off the podium wearing high heels. [*Laughter*] So I want you—so I just—before anything else happens. She saved herself. I was impressed because she was coming off the second riser. But it was a little stressful. So, all right, Diana, come on.

Guard Diana L. Taurasi. Well, on behalf of the Phoenix Mercury and the WNBA, we want to give you a 2014 WNBA Championship jersey.

The President. Nice!

Ms. Taurasi. It's an XL. [*Laughter*] So we might have to get on the Atkins. But thank you very much for having us, Mr. President.

[*At this point, the President was presented with a team jersey.*]

The President. Thank you so much.

Ms. Taurasi. It's an honor.

The President. Thank you. You bet. Thank you. Let's strike this podium.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:31 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Brittney Griner, center, Candice Dupree and Penelope J. Taylor, forwards, DeWanna Bonner, guard/forward, and Erin V. Phillips, former guard, Phoenix Mercury.

Statement on the Death of Amelia Boynton Robinson
August 26, 2015

Amelia Boynton Robinson was a dedicated and courageous leader in the fight for civil rights. For most of her 104 years, Amelia committed herself to a simple, American principle: that everybody deserves the right to vote. Fifty years ago, she marched in Selma, and the quiet heroism of those marchers helped pave the way for the landmark Voting Rights Act. But for the rest of her life, she kept marching: to make sure the law was upheld and barriers to the polls torn down. And America is so fortunate she did. To honor the legacy of an American hero like Amelia Boynton requires only that we follow her example: that all of us fight to protect everyone's right to vote. Earlier this year, in Selma, Michelle and I had the honor to walk with Amelia and other foot soldiers of the civil rights movement. She was as strong, as hopeful, and as indomitable of spirit—as quintessentially American—as I'm sure she was that day 50 years ago. And we offer our thoughts, our prayers, and our enduring gratitude to everyone who loved her.

Remarks Following a Tour of the Faubourg Lafitte Neighborhood in New Orleans, Louisiana
August 27, 2015

Okay, I'm going to have a chance to make a longer set of remarks later, but I just wanted to point out where we are. The Faubourg Lafitte area in Tremé is part of one of the most historic districts in New Orleans and Louisiana and America. A lot of folks think this is where jazz really first started taking root. It is obviously close to downtown and the French Quarter, one of the most important historic African American communities in the country.

And like so much of this area, it was devastated during the storm. But what you're seeing here is an example of the incredible Federal, State, local partnerships that have helped to revitalize this community—not just with this housing, which is all new and was helped—funded through a program called Hope IV—but

also a new school in that direction, a new community center in that direction. And part of our goal has always been to make sure not just that we recovered from the storm, but also that we started dealing with some of the structural inequities that existed long before the storm happened.

And I'm going to say nice things about him later, but I'm going to make sure to say that none of this would have happened had it not been for the outstanding leadership of Mayor Mitch Landrieu, who has been just an unbelievable partner throughout this entire process. We're really proud of what he's doing. You can see the results here.

Now, just because the houses are nice doesn't mean our job is done. This is a community, obviously, that still has a lot of poverty. This is an area where young people still, too often, are taking the wrong path before they graduate from high school. This is a community that still needs resources and still needs help.

But the fact that we can make this many strides 10 years after a terrible, epic disaster, I think, is an indication of the kind of spirit that we have in this city. And it's reflected in our Mayor. So we're proud of you.

Okay, guys, we're going to see you later.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:11 p.m.

Remarks Following a Briefing on Hurricane Preparedness and Recovery Efforts in New Orleans

August 27, 2015

I am here at the Sanchez Community Center, and we've got some outstanding State officials, local officials; Senator Bill Cassidy of Louisiana; some folks like Thad Allen, who were involved in the early recovery efforts here in Katrina; philanthropies like the Red Cross and the Rockefeller Foundation; and local community leadership like the Foundation for Louisiana and the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center.

And what we've been doing is just looking at the lessons that have been learned over the course of the last decade and sharing a sense of pride for the excellent coordination that's taken place between Federal, State, and local governments in the rebuilding process, but also some humility and some sense of urgency about the work that still needs to be done.

So we had a chance to talk about the progress that's been made around protecting New Orleans and protecting the Louisiana coast and water management. And behind me, you can see all kinds of charts and maps that indicate that we now have one of the best water management systems and storm management systems in the world right here in New Orleans, thanks to the work of State and local authorities as well as the Army Corps of Engineers. We talked about the need to continue to restore wetlands and the natural barriers that can mitigate the harm from significant storms.

So that's infrastructure resilience. We also talked about community resilience and human resilience. And what's, I think, been critically important over the last decade is to recognize that it's one thing to stop water from pouring in, it's another thing to make sure that individuals and families have the resources and the structure to rebuild after a tough storm hits. And that means that attention has to be paid to housing; attention has to be paid to employment; attention has to be paid to preparedness; attention has to be paid to equity. And the city of New Orleans, with the help of some private sector as well as public dollars, has been doing some terrific work in making sure that the rebuilding process integrates all those concerns.

And we also talked about lessons learned going forward and how we can share the data that's been learned over the last decade with other communities. So, for example, Robin Barnes of Greater New Orleans, Inc., who specializes in helping small businesses and economic development, actually has worked with us on the Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts, because New Orleans is increasingly becoming

a laboratory for the kind of good work that we're going to have to do all across the country and around the world.

And so everybody here has done some outstanding work, but they also recognize that there's a lot more work to be done. I just want to appreciate all of you for participating and helping me learn a little something here today. [*Laughter*]

And one recurrent theme that's emerged out of this discussion is that perhaps the biggest lesson to be learned from Katrina is making sure that there is trust and effective communication between citizens, their governments, civil society, because when people know each other, trust each other, are accountable to each other, like any human enterprise, mistakes will happen, natural disasters occur, but there's no problem that we as Americans can't solve if we're working together. And that's what New Orleans has been starting to do over the last several years, and it's really showing all across this city.

All right? Thank you very much, everybody. I'll give a longer speech in a second. [*Laughter*] Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:44 p.m. at the Andrew P. Sanchez and Copelin-Byrd Multi-Purpose Center. In his remarks, he referred to Thad W. Allen, executive vice president, Booz Allen Hamilton Inc., in his former capacity as Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard; and Robin Barnes, executive vice president and chief operating officer, Greater New Orleans, Inc.

Remarks on the 10th Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans
August 27, 2015

The President. Everybody, have a seat. Hello, everybody! Where y'at? It is good to be back in the Big Easy. And this is the weather in August all the time, right? [*Laughter*] Every year? As soon as I land in New Orleans, the first thing I do is get hungry. [*Laughter*] When I was here with the family a few years ago, I had a shrimp po'boy at Parkway Bakery and Tavern. I still remember it; that's how good it was. And one day, after I leave office, maybe I'll finally hear Rebirth at the Maple Leaf on Tuesday night. I'll get a chance to "see the Mardi Gras," and somebody will tell me what Carnival for. [*Laughter*] But right now I just go to meetings. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Michelle for the introduction and, more importantly, for the great work she's doing, what she symbolizes, and what she represents in terms of the city bouncing back. I want to acknowledge a great friend and somebody who has been working tirelessly on behalf of this city, and he's following a family legacy of service: your mayor, Mitch Landrieu. Proud of him. His beautiful wife Cheryl. Senator Bill Cassidy is here. Where did Senator Cassidy go? There he is. Congressman Cedric Richmond. Where's the Congressman? There he is over there. We've got a lifelong champion of Louisiana in your former Senator, Mary Landrieu, in the house. [*Applause*] Mary! I want to acknowledge a great supporter to the efforts to recover and rebuild, Congressman Hakeem Jeffries from New York, who has traveled down here with us.

To all the elected officials from Louisiana and Mississippi who are here today, thank you so much for your reception.

I'm here to talk about a specific recovery. But before I begin to talk just about New Orleans, I want to talk about America's recovery, take a little moment of Presidential privilege to talk about what's been happening in our economy. This morning we learned that our economy grew at a stronger and more robust clip back in the spring than anybody knew at the time. The data always lags. We already knew that over the past 5½ years, our businesses have created 13 million new jobs. These new numbers that came out, showing that the economy was growing at a 3.7-percent clip, means that the United States of America remains an anchor of global strength and stability in the world, that we have recovered faster, more steadily, stronger than just about any economy

after the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

And it's important for us to remember that strength. It's been a volatile few weeks around the world. And there's been a lot of reports in the news and the stock market swinging and worries about China and about Europe. But the United States of America, for all the challenges that we still have, continue to have the best cards. We've just got to play them right.

Our economy has been moving and continues to grow, and unemployment continues to come down. And our work is not yet done, but we have to have that sense of steadiness and vision and purpose in order to sustain this recovery so that it reaches everybody and not just some. It's why we need to do everything we can in government to make sure our economy keeps growing. That requires Congress to protect our momentum, not kill it. Congress is about to come back from a 6-week recess. The deadline to fund the Government is, as always, the end of September. And so I want everybody just to understand that Congress has about a month to pass a budget that helps our economy grow. Otherwise, we risk shutting down the Government and services that we all count on for the second time in 2 years. That would not be responsible. It does not have to happen.

Congress needs to fund America in a way that invests in our growth and our security and not cuts us off at the knees by locking in mindless austerity or shortsighted sequester cuts to our economy or our military. I've said I will veto a budget like that. I think most Americans agree. We've got to invest in, rather than cut, things like military readiness, infrastructure, schools, public health, the research and development that keeps our companies on the cutting edge.

That's what great nations do. [*Applause*] That's what great nations do. So—and eventually, we're going to do it anyway, so let's just do it without too much drama. [*Laughter*] Let's do it without another round of threats to shut down the Government. Let's not introduce unrelated partisan issues. Nobody gets to hold the American economy hostage over their own ideological demands. You, the people who send us to Washington, expect better. Am I correct?

Audience members. That's right.

The President. So my message to Congress is: Pass a budget. Prevent a shutdown. Don't wait until the last minute. Don't worry our businesses or our workers by contributing unnecessarily to global uncertainty. Get it done, and keep the United States of America the anchor of global strength that we are and always should be.

Now, that's a process of national recovery that from coast to coast we've been going through. But there's been a specific process of recovery that is perhaps unique in my lifetime, right here in the State of Louisiana, right here in New Orleans.

Not long ago, our gathering here in the Lower Nine probably would have seemed unlikely. As I was flying here today with a homegirl from Louisiana, Donna Brazile, she was—she saved all the magazines, and she was whipping them out, and one of them was a picture of the Lower Ninth right after the storm had happened. And it—the notion that there would be anything left seemed unimaginable at the time.

Today, this new community center stands as a symbol of the extraordinary resilience of this city, the extraordinary resilience of its people, the extraordinary resilience of the entire Gulf Coast and of the United States of America. You are an example of what is possible when, in the face of tragedy and in the face of hardship, good people come together to lend a hand, and brick by brick, block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood, you build a better future.

And that, more than any other reason, is why I've come back here today—plus, Mitch Landrieu asked me to. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. [*Laughter*] It's been 10 years since Katrina hit, devastating communities in Louisiana and Mississippi, across the Gulf Coast. In the days following its landfall, more than 1,800 of our fellow citizens—men, women, and children—lost their lives. Some folks in this room may have lost a loved one in that storm.

Thousands of people saw their homes destroyed, livelihoods wiped out, hopes and dreams shattered. Many scattered in an exodus to cities across the country, and too many still haven't returned. Those who stayed and lived through that epic struggle still feel the trauma sometimes of what happened. As one woman from Gentilly recently wrote me, "A deep part of the whole story is the grief." So there was grief then, and there is still some grief in our hearts.

Here in New Orleans, a city that embodies a celebration of life suddenly seemed devoid of life. A place once defined by color and sound—the second line down the street, the crawfish boils in backyards, the music always in the air—suddenly, it was dark and silent. And the world watched in horror. We saw those rising waters drown the iconic streets of New Orleans. Families stranded on rooftops. Bodies in the streets. Children crying, crowded in the Superdome. An American city dark and under water.

And this was something that was supposed to never happen here. It—maybe someplace else, but not here, not in America. And we came to realize that what started out as a natural disaster became a manmade disaster, a failure of government to look out for its own citizens. And the storm laid bare a deeper tragedy that had been brewing for decades, because we came to understand that New Orleans, like so many cities and communities across the country, had for too long been plagued by structural inequalities that left too many people, especially poor people, especially people of color, without good jobs or affordable health care or decent housing. Too many kids grew up surrounded by violent crime, cycling through substandard schools where few had a shot to break out of poverty. And so, like a body weakened already, undernourished already, when the storm hit, there was no resources to fall back on.

Shortly after I visited—shortly after the storm, I visited with folks, not here because we couldn't distract local recovery efforts. Instead, I visited folks in a shelter in Houston, many who had been displaced. And one woman told me, "We had nothing before the hurricane, and now we have less than nothing." We had nothing before the hurricane; now we had less than nothing.

And we acknowledge this loss and this pain not to dwell on the past, not to wallow in grief; we do it to fortify our commitment and to bolster our hope, to understand what it is that we've learned and how far we've come.

Because this is a city that slowly, unmistakably, together, is moving forward. Because the project of rebuilding here wasn't just to restore the city as it had been. It was to build a city as it should be: a city where everyone, no matter what they look like, how much money they've got, where they come from, where they're born, has a chance to make it.

And I'm here to say that on that larger project of a better, stronger, more just New Orleans, the progress that you have made is remarkable. [*Applause*] The progress you've made is remarkable.

That's not to say things are perfect. Mitch would be the first one to say that. We know that African Americans and folks in hard-hit parishes like Plaquemines and St. Bernard are less likely to feel like they've recovered. Certainly, we know violence still scars the lives of too many youth in this city. As hard as rebuilding levees are——

Audience member. Mental health!

The President. As hard as——

Audience member. Our children need mental health!

The President. I agree with that. But I'll get to that. Thank you, ma'am.

As hard as rebuilding levees is, as hard as rebuilding housing is, real change—real lasting, structural change—that's even harder. And it takes courage to experiment with new ideas and change the old ways of doing things. That's hard. Getting it right and making sure that everybody is included and everybody has a fair shot at success, that takes time. That's not unique to New Orleans. We've got those challenges all across the country.

But I'm here to say, I'm here to hold up a mirror and say, because of you, the people of New Orleans, working together, this city is moving in the right direction. And I have never

been more confident that together we will get to where we need to go.

You inspire me. Your efforts inspire me. And no matter how hard it's been and how hard and how long the road ahead might seem, you're working and building and striving for a better tomorrow. I see evidence of it all across this city. And by the way, along the way, the people of New Orleans didn't just inspire me, you inspired all of America. Folks have been watching what's happened here, and they've seen a reflection of the very best of the American spirit.

As President, I've been proud to be your partner. Across the board, I've made the recovery and rebuilding of the Gulf Coast a priority. I made promises when I was a Senator that I'd help. And I've kept those promises.

We're cutting redtape to help you build back even stronger. We're taking the lessons we've learned here, we've applied them across the country, including places like New York and New Jersey after Hurricane Sandy.

If Katrina was initially an example of what happens when government fails, the recovery has been an example of what's possible when government works together—State and local, community—everybody working together as true partners.

Together, we've delivered resources to help Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida rebuild schools and hospitals, roads, police and fire stations, restore historic buildings and museums. And we're building smarter, doing everything from elevating homes to retrofitting buildings to improving drainage, so that our communities are better prepared for the next storm.

Working together, we've transformed education in this city. Before the storm, New Orleans public schools were largely broken, leaving generations of low-income kids without a decent education. Today, thanks to parents and educators, school leaders, nonprofits, we're seeing real gains in achievement, with new schools, more resources to retain and develop and support great teachers and principals. We have data that shows before the storm, the high school graduation rate was 54 percent. Today, it's up to 73 percent. Before the storm, college enrollment was 37 percent. Today, it's almost 60 percent. We still have a long way to go, but that is real progress. New Orleans is coming back better and stronger.

Working together, we're providing housing assistance to more families today than before the storm, with new apartments and housing vouchers. And we will keep working until everybody who wants to come home can come home.

Together, we're building a New Orleans that is as entrepreneurial as any place in the country, with a focus on expanding job opportunities and making sure that more people benefit from a growing economy here. We're creating jobs to rebuild the city's transportation infrastructure, expanding training programs for industries like high-tech manufacturing, but also water management, because we've been building some good water management around here—[*laughter*]—and we want to make sure everybody has access to those good, well-paying jobs. Small businesses like Michelle's are growing. It's small businesses like hers that are helping to fuel 65 straight months of private sector job growth in America. That's the longest streak in American history.

Together, we're doing more to make sure that everyone in this city has access to great health care. More folks have access to primary care at neighborhood clinics so that they can get the preventive care that they need. We're building a brand new VA Medical Center downtown, alongside a thriving biosciences corridor that's attracting new jobs and investment. We are working to make sure that we have additional mental health facilities across the city and across the country. And more people have access to quality, affordable health care, some of the more than 16 million Americans who have gained health insurance over the past few years.

All of this progress is the result of the commitment and drive of the people of this region. I saw that spirit today. We—Mitch and I started walking around a little bit. Such a nice day outside. And we went to Faubourg Lafitte, we were in Tremé, and we saw returning residents

living in brandnew homes, mixed income, new homes near schools and clinics and parks, childcare centers, more opportunities for working families.

We saw that spirit today at Willie Mae's Scotch House. After Katrina had destroyed that legendary restaurant, some of the best chefs from the country decided America could not afford to lose such an important place. So they came down here to help, helped rebuild. And I just sampled some of her fried chicken. [*Laughter*] It was really good—[*laughter*]—although, I did get a grease spot on my suit. [*Laughter*] But that's okay. If you come to New Orleans and you don't have a grease spot somewhere, then you didn't enjoy the city. Just glad I didn't get it on my tie. [*Laughter*]

We all just heard that spirit of New Orleans in the remarkable young people from Roots of Music. When the storm washed away a lot of middle school music programs, Roots of Music helped fill that gap. And today, it's building the next generation of musical talent: the next Irma Thomas or the next Trombone Shorty or the next Dr. John. There's a Marsalis kid in here somewhere. How you doing?

And I saw it in the wonderful young men I met earlier who are part of "NOLA for Life," which is focused on reducing the number of murders in the city of New Orleans. This is a program that works with the White House's "My Brother's Keepers" initiative to make sure that all young people, and particularly our boys and young men of color, who so disproportionately are impacted by crime and violence, have the opportunity to fulfill their full potential.

In fact, after the storm, this city became a laboratory for urban innovation across the board. And we've been tackling with you, as a partner, all sorts of major challenges: fighting poverty, supporting our homeless veterans. And as a result, New Orleans has become a model for the Nation as the first city—the first major city to end veterans' homelessness, which is a remarkable achievement.

You're also becoming a model for the Nation when it comes to disaster response and resilience. We learned lessons from Katrina. So the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers developed stricter standards, more advanced techniques for levees. Here in Louisiana, we built a $14 billion system of improved levees and pump stations and gates, a system that stood the test of Hurricane Isaac.

We've revamped FEMA—and I just have to say, by the way, there's a man named Craig Fugate who runs FEMA and has been doing extraordinary work, and his team, all across the country, every time there's a disaster. I love me some Craig Fugate. [*Laughter*] Although, it's a little disturbing. He gets excited when there are disasters—[*laughter*]—because he gets restless if everything is just quiet. But we've—under his leadership, we've revamped FEMA into a stronger, more efficient agency. In fact, the whole Federal Government has gotten smarter at preventing and recovering from disasters and serving as a better partner to local and State governments.

And as I'll talk about next week, when I visit Alaska, making our communities more resilient is going to be increasingly important, because we're going to see more extreme weather events as the result of climate change: deeper droughts, deadlier wildfires, stronger storms. That's why, in addition to things like new and better levees, we've also been investing in restoring wetlands and other natural systems that are just as critical for storm protection.

So we've made a lot of progress over the past 10 years. You've made a lot of progress. That gives us hope. But it doesn't allow for complacency. It doesn't mean we can rest. Our work here won't be done when almost 40 percent of children still live in poverty in this city. That's not a finished job. That's not a full recovery. Our work won't be done when a typical Black household earns half the income of White households in this city. The work is not done yet.

Our work is not done when there's still too many people who have yet to find good, affordable housing, and too many people—especially African American men—who can't find a job. Not when there are still too many people who haven't been able to come back home; folks who, around the country, every day, live the

words sung by Louis Armstrong: "Do you know what it means to miss New Orleans?"

But the thing is, the people of New Orleans, there's something in you guys that is just irrepressible. You have a—you guys have a way of making a way out of no way. You know the sun comes out after every storm. You've got hope. Especially your young people reflect hope, young people like Victor York-Carter. Where's Victor? Victor York-Carter. There—stand up Victor. I was just talking to Victor. I had some lunch with him. These are these fine young men that I just met with. Stand up everybody. See, these are the guys who I had chicken with. Really impressive, have overcome more than their fair share of challenges, but are still focused on the future. You guys, sit down. I don't want you to start getting embarrassed. [*Laughter*]

So I'll just give you one example. Victor grew up in the Eighth Ward. Gifted art student, loved math. He was 13 when Katrina hit. And he remembers waking up to what looked like something out of a disaster movie. He and his family waded across the city, towing his younger brother in a trash can to keep him afloat.

They were eventually evacuated to Texas. Six months later, they returned, and the city was almost unrecognizable. Victor saw his peers struggling to cope, many of them still traumatized, their lives still disordered. So he joined an organization called Rethink to help young people get more involved in rebuilding New Orleans. And recently, he finished a coding boot camp at Operation Spark; today, he's studying to earn a high-tech job. He wants to introduce more young people to science and technology and civics so that they have the tools to change the world.

And so Victor and these young men that I just met with, they've overcome extraordinary odds. They've lived through more than most of us will ever have to endure. They've made some mistakes along the way. But for all that they've been through, they have been just as determined to improve their own lives, to take responsibility for themselves, but also to try to see if they can help others along the way.

So when I talk to young men like that, that gives me hope. It's still hard. I told them they can't get down on themselves. Tough stuff will happen along the way. But if they've come this far, they can keep on going.

And Americans like you—the people of New Orleans, young men like this—you're what recovery has been all about. You're why I'm confident that we can recover from crisis and start to move forward. You've helped this country recover from a crisis and helped it move forward. You're the reason 13 million new jobs have been created. You're the reason the unemployment rate fell from 10 percent to 5.3. You're the reason that layoffs are near an alltime low. You're the reason the uninsured rate is at an alltime low and the high school graduation rate is at an alltime high and the deficit has been cut by two-thirds and two wars are over. And nearly eight—180,000 American troops who were serving in Iraq and Afghanistan have now gone down to 15,000. And a clean energy revolution is helping to save this planet.

You're the reason why justice has expanded and now we're focused on making sure that everybody is treated fairly under the law, and why people have the freedom to marry whoever they love from sea to shining sea.

I tell you, we're moving into the next Presidential cycle, the next political season, and you will hear a lot of people telling you everything that's wrong with America. And that's okay. That's a proper part of our democracy. One of the things about America is, we're never satisfied. We keep pushing forward. We keep asking questions. We keep challenging our government. We keep challenging our leaders. We keep looking for the next set of challenges to tackle. We find what's wrong because we have confidence that we can fix it.

But it's important that we remember what's right and what's good and what's hopeful about this country. It's worth remembering that for all the tragedy, for the all images of Katrina in those first few days, in those first few months, look at what's happened here. It's worth remembering the thousands of Americans like Michelle and Victor and Mrs. Willie Mae and

the folks who rallied around her, Americans all across this country who, when they saw neighbors and friends or strangers in need, came to help. And people who today still spend their time every day helping others: rolling up their sleeves, doing the hard work of changing this country without the need for credit or the need for glory; don't get their name in the papers, don't see their day in the sun, do it because it's right.

These Americans live the basic values that define this country, the value that we've been reminded of in these past 10 years as we've come back from a crisis that changed this city and an economic crisis that spread throughout the Nation: the basic notion that I am my brother's keeper and I am my sister's keeper and that we look out for each other and that we're all in this together.

That's the story of New Orleans, but that's also the story of America: a city that, for almost 300 years, has been the gateway to America's soul. Where the jazz makes you cry, the funerals make you dance—[*laughter*]—the bayou makes you believe all kinds of things. [*Laughter*] A place that has always brought together people of all races and religions and languages. And everybody adds their culture and their flavor into this city's gumbo. You remind our Nation that for all of our differences, in the end, what matters is, we're all in the same boat. We all share a similar destiny.

If we stay focused on that common purpose, if we remember our responsibility to ourselves, but also our responsibilities and obligations to one another, we will not just rebuild this city, we will rebuild this country. We'll make sure not just these young men, but every child in America has a structure and support and love and the kind of nurturing that they need to succeed. We'll leave behind a city and a nation that's worthy of generations to come.

That's what you've gotten started. Now we've got to finish the job.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4 p.m. at the Andrew P. Sanchez and Copelin-Byrd Multi-Purpose Center. In his remarks, he referred to Michelle Gobert, president, Signs Now; Donna Brazile, vice chair of voter registration and participation, Democratic National Committee; Willie Mae Seaton, founder, Willie Mae's Scotch House restaurant; musicians Troy "Trombone Shorty" Andrews and Malcolm J. "Dr. John" Rebennack, Jr.; and Victor York-Carter, Garland Sipper, Caswick Naverro, and Denzel Shine, participants in a "My Brother's Keeper" affiliate program, who had lunch with the President.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session During a Live Webcast on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action To Prevent Iran From Obtaining a Nuclear Weapon

August 28, 2015

Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations Chairman Stephen M. Greenberg. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I'm Stephen Greenberg, and I'm privileged to be here at the White House. I'm the chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. To my right is Michael Siegal. Michael is the chair of the Board of Trustees of the Jewish Federations of North America. And sitting next to him is the individual we are most privileged to have address us today, the President of the United States, Barack Obama.

Mr. President, I can equivocally state to you that our entire community is united in its desire to ensure—ensure—that Iran never acquire a nuclear weapon. We know, sir, that that's a goal that you have personally declared. And we also know it's one that's shared by all the Members of Congress and the American people. So, sir, whatever differences may exist as to how best to achieve that

goal, they're neither political, nor are they personal.

Mr. President, we all want to, and we must, emerge from this process united. We must reaffirm our commitment to that special relationship between the United States and the Israeli people and the Israeli Government. We must be vigilant, totally vigilant, in our fight against global terrorism and all of its supporters. And we certainly, sir, must dedicate ourselves to making sure that Iran complies with all the requirements in the agreement, U.S. law, and U.N. regulations.

Mr. President, people of good will may differ on the approach, but never the objective. There's just too much at stake. We're so grateful to you that you've taken the time to speak today to leaders and members of the Jewish community, as we continue to educate and inform our constituents about this most critical issue.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my honor to present the President of the United States, Barack Obama.

The President. Well, Steve, thank you very much. Thank you, Michael. And I think the approach I'm going to take is to make some informal remarks at the top, and then I want to spend most of the time hearing from some of the questions that have already been submitted. But I really want to thank the Conference, the Federations, for helping to host this.

And I know you've already had a chance to hear from the Secretary of Energy, Ernie Moniz, who went through, no doubt, many of the technical aspects of the deal that has been shaped by the P5-plus-1. What I want to do is just step back and remind everybody how we got here.

When I ran for office, I made a series of commitments, series of promises to the American people. One of those commitments was that Iran would not get a nuclear weapon. Another commitment was that I would do everything in my power as President of the United States to preserve the unbreakable bond between the United States and Israel and to ensure Israel's security.

A third commitment was that, given the lessons of the previous decade, I would never hesitate to use military force where necessary to protect America, its friends and allies around the world, but that I would always first try a diplomatic approach, not only because war inevitably creates unintended consequences and great pain and hardship, but also because sometimes, diplomacy is more effective in achieving our goals.

And the deal that the P5-plus-1 has struck accomplishes each of those promises and commitments that I made when I ran for office. I know that many people who are listening know the basic outlines of the deal, but I just want to reiterate the core of it.

This deal blocks every way, every pathway that Iran might take in order to obtain a nuclear weapon. It makes sure that the centrifuges that are currently in Natanz are removed, except for a handful, and it makes sure that they cannot immediately use more advanced centrifuges to build up their capacity to create enriched uranium that might be diverted into a weapons program.

The underground facility of Fordow is converted into a research facility and no longer will have in it centrifuges that could be used to create nuclear weapons or nuclear materials and might be difficult to reach. The heavy-water facility at Arak that, if struck by a missile, could create a plume and, thereby, is more difficult to deal with, that is going to be reconfigured.

So you have the existing facilities being transformed. You have a commitment in which stockpiles of highly enriched uranium are being shipped out. We create then a verification and inspection mechanism across the entire nuclear production chain within Iran that is unprecedented, more rigorous than anything that has ever been negotiated in the history of nuclear nonproliferation.

And we also preserve the capacity to snap back all of the various sanctions provisions that we put in place very systematically—my administration working in concert with our partners over the last 5 years, sanctions that ultimately brought Iran to the table—we have the

capacity to snap those back in the event that Iran cheats or does not abide by the terms of the deal.

So what we have done is, for the first 10 years, essentially restricted Iran's capacity not just to weaponize nuclear power, but we severely constrained any nuclear program, peaceful or militarized. After 10 years, they're able to obtain some additional advanced centrifuges, but they continue to have to be carefully monitored in terms of the stockpiles that they produce.

And even critics of this deal acknowledge that for the first 15 years or so, we have extended the breakout time so that not only are we on them, constantly observing what they're doing, but if they decided that they wanted to break the deal, we would have ample time to respond in ways that prevented them from getting a nuclear weapon. The breakout time would be significantly longer than it is right now.

So, because of the stringency of the deal, the vast majority of experts on nuclear proliferation have endorsed this deal. The world is more or less united, with some significant exceptions, obviously, the State of Israel and perhaps others less publicly, around the deal. You have seen people who are unlikely bedfellows—Brent Scowcroft and Elizabeth Warren—endorse the deal. [*Laughter*] And we have said to Members of Congress, we are prepared to answer every single question and provide exhaustive hearings on every element of this.

The criticisms of the deal have really come down to a few buckets, and maybe I'll just address those very quickly upfront. Number one, people have said that, well, Iran will cheat. They're not trustworthy. And I keep on emphasizing, we don't trust Iran. Iran is antagonistic to the United States. It is anti-Semitic. It has denied the Holocaust. It has called for the destruction of Israel. It is an unsavory regime. But this deal doesn't rely on trust, it relies on verification and our capacity to catch them when they cheat and to respond vigorously if they do. And it's precisely because we are not counting on the nature of the regime to change that it's so important for us to make sure that they don't have a nuclear weapon. And this is the best way to do it.

A second argument I've heard is, well, they are going to, in 15 years, have the ability to break out, and they'll be more powerful. But in fact, we're not giving away anything in this deal in terms of our capacity to respond if they choose to cheat. We are not giving up our ability to respond militarily. We're not giving up our ability to impose sanctions. Any of the tools that critics of the deal are suggesting we could be applying now we'll be able to apply in 15 years. But we'll have the advantage of a deal that the entire world has ratified, that Iran has committed to, saying that it's not going to have a nuclear weapon. We will had—have purchased 15 years of familiarity with their program so that we know exactly what's going on. And so anybody sitting in my chair 15 years from now will be in a much stronger position to respond if they at that point decide to break out than a President would next year or the year after.

Number three, people have suggested that this will give a windfall to Iran and they will be able to conduct more terrorist activity and destabilizing activity in the region. I want to make sure people have some perspective here. Iran's defense budget is $15 billion a year. By comparison, ours is around $600 billion. Because of the unprecedented partnership we have with Israel, Israel has a much stronger military. Our Gulf partners spend eight times as much money as Iran does on their military.

So Iran is a regional power; it's not a superpower. The money that they're obtaining is the money that has been frozen under sanctions. They will get about $56 billion back, but they're going to have to spend that to prop up an economy that's been crushed by our sanctions. Their economy will improve modestly, but there's no analysis that's been done by our experts that suggests that they are going to have a qualitatively different capacity to engage in some of the nefarious activities that they've done before.

That's not to say that those aren't very serious issues. We have to stop Iran from getting missiles to Hizballah that threaten Israel. We

have to stop their destabilizing activities using proxies in other parts of the region. But to do that requires us to better coordinate with our partners, improve our intelligence, improve—continue to build on things like Iron Dome that protect populations from missiles coming in over the border. And those are all things that we have to do anyway. We're in a much better position to do it if we also know in the meantime that Iran doesn't have a nuclear weapon. That's the one game changer, and that's why it has to be our number-one priority.

So I'll—let me just close this initial set of comments by saying something about the U.S.-Israel relationship that you raised, Steve. The bond between the United States and Israel is not political. It's not based on alliances of convenience. It is something that grows out of family ties and bonds that stretch back generations and shared values and shared commitments and shared beliefs in democracy. And like all families, sometimes, there are going to be disagreements, and sometimes, people get angrier about disagreements in families than they do with folks who aren't family. I understand that. But we've repeatedly throughout the history of the United States and Israel had times where the U.S. administration and the Israeli Government had disagreements, and that does not affect the core commitments that we have to each other.

And throughout my administration, even my fiercest critics in Israel would acknowledge that we've maintained unprecedented military cooperation, unprecedented intelligence coordination. We have not only maintained, but enhanced, the degree of military assistance that we provide, including helping to fund things like the Iron Dome program that has protected and saved lives inside of Israel.

And what I have said repeatedly is that as soon as this particular debate is over, my hope is, is that the Israeli Government will immediately want to rejoin conversations that we had started long before about how we can continue to improve and enhance Israel's security in a very troubled neighborhood.

But what I would emphasize is that the commitment to Israel is sacrosanct and it is nonpartisan. It always has been, and it always will be. And I would suggest that, in terms of the tone of this debate, everybody keep in mind that we're all pro-Israel. We're all pro–U.S.-Israel. And we have to make sure that we don't impugn people's motives even as we have what is a very serious debate about how best to protect the United States, Israel, and the world community from a potentially destabilizing Iranian nuclear weapon.

So, with that, why don't I open it up for some questions?

Debate Over Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action To Prevent Iran From Obtaining a Nuclear Weapon

Jewish Federations of North America Board of Trustees Chair Michael D. Siegal. Thank you, Mr. President. It's my honor to represent the thousands of very concerned members of our community, to have this opportunity to talk to you about the Iranian deal. As you can imagine, we have thousands of viewers and thousands of questions that have been submitted. And we've read them all, believe it or not. [*Laughter*] I don't know that I've read them all, but we've read them all. And as you might suggest and assume, there's quite a divergence of opinion on this issue——

The President. Yes.

Mr. Siegal. ——and its implications, but there are some clear themes.

So I would say—and ask you—it's been over a month since you announced the agreement with Iran, and those who support it and those who are against it have made their views known at this point. And in the debate, there has been heated rhetoric from both sides that has crossed the acceptable lines of even tough political discourse.

So American Jewish supporters of the deal have been called ugly names, while opponents have accused—have been accused of warmongering and worse. And so many of these allegations come with, sort of, deep anti-Semitic undertones. Needless to say, this uncivil rhetoric has made our community very uncomfortable.

During your time in office, you have been clear about your opposition to anti-Semitism in

all of its repugnant forms. So, Mr. President, what is your reaction to the use of this hateful rhetoric? And what can we do collectively to elevate the dialogue?

The President. Well, Michael, as I mentioned, I think that people of good will can come down on different sides of this issue, although I would challenge a little bit the notion that there has been sort of an equivalence on both sides of heated rhetoric.

I—the truth of the matter is, is that when Jerry Nadler, for example—a person who, for personal reasons, but also political integrity, has consistently stood by Israel—is attacked in ways that are appalling, a man of conscience who was—had the courage to oppose the Iraq vote at a time when that was very unpopular and was proven right, that is the kind of stuff that I think people have to be deeply concerned about.

Those who support the deal I think have—certainly my administration and me—have tried to stay focused on what we think are the logical conclusions and facts based on the nature of the deal and what alternatives are available.

And at no point have I ever suggested, for example, that somebody is a warmonger, meaning they want war. What I have said—and I—this I don't apologize for—is that if this deal is rejected, if we do not have this mechanism that nuclear experts around the world have said is unprecedented and severely constrains Iran's program, then there have to be alternatives. There has to be a better way to accomplish our goal of making sure Iran doesn't have a nuclear weapon.

Critics have suggested that that doesn't have to mean military actions. We could, for example, just impose unilateral sanctions and double down and squeeze Iran harder. The problem there is, is that we actually have experience of unilateral sanctions without the support of the world community. That's what was happening before I came into office, and it didn't work. Iran accelerated its nuclear program unimpeded because we did not have global cooperation.

My administration cobbled together that global cooperation, and it was premised on the notion that if in fact we got a deal that prevents Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, then those sanctions would be lifted. If now we rejected the opinion of the world community, then it is unlikely—and this is not just my opinion; you've heard it from Ambassadors from these countries—that they would maintain those sanctions. So that does not end up being an option.

Once you've cut off those options—the deal that I'm proposing and the ability to maintain long-term sanctions of the sort that we put in place previously—then at that point, we really don't have options because we're already at a point where Iran's breakout time is relatively short and we're kind of flying blind. And the logical conclusion then is, is that for any President—me or my successor—to make sure that Iran is getting a nuclear weapon, I'm going to have to resort to some sort of military action because there aren't going to be a lot of other options available to us, not many tools left in the toolkit.

And I make that point, Michael, because that's not to suggest that opponents of this deal want war. What it is, is a sober analysis of what options we have available to us and why it's so important, I think, for us to get behind this deal and not pretend that there are other easier options that are available to us.

But in all this debate, what's important to remember is, is that we're all pro-Israel and we're all family. And the Jewish Members in Congress who are supporting this deal—I don't need to give you their biographies—I think they feel a commitment to Israel and having knowledge of the Jewish history that rivals anyone else's. And those in my administration who care deeply about this issue and who are supporting this deal, their motives shouldn't be questioned.

And those who oppose it, my view is, is that they have a sincere concern because, just as the people in Iran—Israel have a sincere concern, when you have a regime that denies the Holocaust, that's going to make you worried. You've got to take that seriously. And so I rec-

ognize where the anxieties come from. But I think that it's important for us to remember the bonds that hold us together more than—that go well beyond this particular issue.

Israel-U.S. Security Cooperation/Israel-U.S. Relations

Mr. Siegal. Thank you. I wanted to expand a little bit on a comment you made in your remarks about the divisiveness that's been going on. It's been divisive in Congress. It's been divisive in the Jewish community and, to some degree, across America. And so—and it's been obviously to some degree some concern about the divisiveness between the United States and the Israel relationship, maybe just at the governmental level.

But regardless of how the vote takes place, many of the viewers are concerned about the disagreements; that the deal may have created some distance—we've heard about that; you commented on it—between the governments of the United States and Israel. And our community gets very, very unsettled and very anxious when there is daylight between our positions. And so, while we have received hundreds of questions on this in this regard, what I'd like to ask you—and you made a comment about how do we reenergize and how do we recreate the dialogue that was occurring before this deal—so how do you see us reenergizing the relationship between Israel and the United States?

The President. I'll be honest with you, I think this is going to happen pretty quick, because we both have a shared interest in not just preventing Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, but also making sure that they're not sending weapons to Hizballah, that they're not destabilizing—that Iran is not destabilizing its neighbors. So not only do we have a shared history, shared values, not only are we family, but even on this particular issue of Iran, we agree more than we disagree.

And so, as I indicated earlier, we've been in discussions with the Israeli Government for months now about the importance of us getting back on track in working together to enhance our security cooperation, to think about, what are the next generations of missile defense programs that we can set up? How do we improve our intelligence and interdiction to prevent arms from being sent to terrorist organizations? How do we counteract Iranian proxies in the region? And those are all things that we should be doing anyway, even if we weren't having this debate on the Iranian deal.

I've heard some suggest that the reason I'm calling for all this enhanced cooperation is to compensate for the fact that Iran is going to be more dangerous after this deal. Nothing could be further from the truth. These are things that I've been suggesting we need to be doing consistently. And we will be much safer once this deal is in place and we know that Iran is not getting a nuclear weapon. But it doesn't solve all the problems that we have with Iran. And Israel knows that; we know that. So those conversations, I think, will move rapidly, and I think they will move smoothly.

In terms of differences generally between the U.S. Government and the Israeli Government, I've said this before. Sometimes, I've got—I have arguments with friends, and sometimes, I have different views. What I've found after 54 years on this Earth is that my best friends are the ones who I can be honest with. And if I think that they're wrong on something, I've got to be able to say it. And if they think I'm wrong, they've got to be able to give voice to it. That's what being good friends means.

And I know that sometimes that makes it difficult for members of the Jewish community because, as you said, the preference is no daylight, and that means no arguments. But that actually can be dangerous itself if it leads us to make bad decisions that ultimately are bad for the national security of both countries. Better to air these things out even if it's sometimes uncomfortable, as long as the tone is civil and as long as we keep our eye on the big picture, which is, the fates of our two countries are always going to be intertwined.

Israel-U.S. Security Cooperation

Mr. Siegal. Great. Thank you, Mr. President. On that we have—as you indicated, we're all aware of the very bad neighborhood that

exists around Israel and how the noose seems to be getting a little bit tighter. You wrote to Congress recently, and we received many questions regarding the issue of the neighborhood and the threats of the neighborhood. So we have a question from Randall Meacham of Durham, North Carolina, who says——

The President. Great town.

Mr. Siegal. Yes, it's a—it really is. Good colleges. It says: "Will America continue to help Israel maintain its strategic and qualitative military edge in the region?"

The President. Yes. That's always been a priority of ours. That's a central policy of the United States, through both Democratic and Republican administrations. My administration, as I said before, has consistently applied that principle in concrete ways, and we'll continue to do so. We think it's very important that our strongest ally in the region, our closest friend, is able to protect itself. And I know that that's something that I've had repeated conversations with Prime Minister Netanyahu about.

It's not just that the United States will come to the aid of our friends and neighbors. I think in light of the tragic history of the Jewish people, there is a legitimate and understandable desire on the part of Israel to make sure that it can protect itself from whatever threats may arise. And that's why the QME—the qualitative military edge—is so important. And that's why you've had bipartisan support for the concrete manifestations of that, in weapons systems, in military aid. And there are a host of consultations that have already been taking place on that that will continue long into the future.

Iran's Nuclear Program

Mr. Siegal. Thank you for your answer on that one. We have another question from one of our viewers, a Donald Ashkenazi, from Great Neck, New York, who wants to know the risks of the deal. So you've got four questions, much like our Passover Seder has four questions, which I know you do at the White House.

The President. Absolutely.

Mr. Siegal. I haven't been invited, but okay.

The President. Well—[*laughter*].

Mr. Siegal. It says: "Aren't you concerned"—so I'll read them—"aren't you concerned that after 15 years, Iran will have access to the highly enriched uranium that they need to build a nuclear weapon—one of the things you talked about? Do you worry at that time that Iran might build as large a nuclear infrastructure as they want? What about others in the region? And do you expect that others will also insist on building comparable nuclear infrastructures? And then lastly, and importantly, how does this deal reduce the risk of nuclear proliferation in the region?"

The President. Good. One thing that might be helpful is to understand, sort of, what a lot of this argument has been about. I think that in the best of all worlds, Iran would have no nuclear infrastructure whatsoever. There wouldn't be a single nut, bolt, building, nuclear scientist, uranium mine anywhere inside of Iran. And that, I suppose, would be the single guarantee that Iran never has a nuclear weapon, unless it purchased one, of course, from North Korea——

Mr. Siegal. Right.

The President. ——which it could also do.

Unfortunately, that's not a reality that's attainable. And those who say they want a better deal, that this isn't a good deal and they want a better deal, typically mean that not only do they want Iran not to have nuclear weapons, but they don't want them to have any nuclear program at all, even a peaceful one.

The problem is, is that even Iranians who oppose this regime believe that Iran should have the right for—to peaceful nuclear programs. The world community—not just the Russians or the Chinese, but the Europeans, the Indians, the Japanese, others—they all believe that under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, you are allowed to have peaceful nuclear power. You just can't have a weapon.

So this deal is designed to essentially put Iran in the penalty box for the first 15 years, where even its peaceful nuclear program is severely constrained. After 15 years, assuming they've abided by that deal, they can then start opening up their peaceful nuclear program.

But their prohibition on weaponizing nuclear power, that continues in perpetuity and will continue to be monitored by the toughest inspection regime that exists under the current international rules, called the Additional Protocol. And we'll still be monitoring it very carefully, and we will have had 15 years of knowledge about what their program is.

Now, is it possible that at the end of 15 years, they now start introducing some more advanced centrifuges and, at some point, they feel comfortable enough, cocky enough, where they say to themselves, now is the time for us to break out, we're going to kick out all the IAEA inspectors, we're going to announce that we're going to pursue a nuclear weapon? Is that possible? Absolutely. Just as it's possible that they could have done that next week if we hadn't had this deal. The question then becomes, have we given up any ability to respond forcefully? And as I indicated in my opening remarks, we will have not given anything at all.

When I came into office, I talked to the Pentagon to say, it's not enough for us just to beat our chest and rattle our sabers. Do we have specific plans in terms of how we would respond if necessary to Iran dashing for the goal line in getting a nuclear weapon? And we prepared and made sure that we could respond. And we have shared a lot of information with our Israeli partners and our other partners in the region about our confidence in our capacity to respond. A President of the United States 15 years from now is not going to be in a worse position to respond, he'll be in a stronger position, or she will be in a stronger position, to respond. And so that's something that I feel great confidence about.

The alternative—I've never understood the logic that says, because there may be issues that we have to deal with 15 years from now, we should reject a deal that ensures us for 15 years not having a nuclear-weaponized Iran. And we now are in a situation in which they could break out next year, without inspectors on the ground to monitor effectively, without the international constraints that this deal provides, and forcing us or the Israelis to make that same decision, isolated, without international legitimacy, and in a situation where even the best estimates suggest that, at best, a military approach at this juncture would probably forestall a determined Iran for a year or two from getting a nuclear weapon.

Iran's Support of Terrorism

Mr. Siegal. Thank you. So you've mentioned a few times and I want to expand a little bit on about what you've said about Iran being an untrustworthy partner in the agreement. As we've seen even post the agreement, we've seen the Ayatollah spew just hateful rhetoric against America, against Israel, against yourself, personally, as it turns out. [*Laughter*] And so, in the agreement, right, there's sort of this immediate financial relief that occurs——

The President. Well, it's not immediate. The way this works is, is that they're going to have to effectively shut down Fordow as it's currently configured, the underground facility; take out the majority of the centrifuges in Natanz, the aboveground facility; entirely convert the heavy-water reactor at Arak; put in place the inspection—they've got to perform across the board, which will take them months before they then get relief.

Mr. Siegal. All right, it—so technically they have to have certain actions and behaviors.

The President. Well, these are big actions.

Mr. Siegal. Not to diminish their actions.

The President. They're getting rid of 98 percent of their stockpile. Go ahead.

Mr. Siegal. But there is financial relief——

The President. Yes.

Mr. Siegal. ——as well as perhaps billions of dollars of additional commercial contracts that will come their way. Somewhere during the agreement—I think it's after 8 years—they get a conventional weapon, kind of, relief from the United Nations, as well as, as we've seen, after the expiration of time, they could do some unfettered things that we don't like. And nothing in the agreement it seems to require them to change any of their bad behavior that they're doing.

So we have a specific question from one of our audiences—I apologize for that.

The President. No problem.

Mr. Siegal. So, from Terry Rosenberg from Boston. She asks: "Mr. President, what can be done about Iranian behavior and their support of terrorism, now and in the future, and what will transform—what do you believe will really transform Iran to become a more responsible global player?"

The President. Well, first of all, I think it's important—because there was a lot of stuff in that question——

Mr. Siegal. Yes.

The President. ——so I want to unpack some of it. Nothing in this agreement prevents us from continuing to push back forcefully against terrorist activity, support for terrorist proxies in the region, destabilizing activities in the region. We are not normalizing relations with Iran here. [*Laughter*]

What we are doing is taking one game-changing problem—them getting a nuclear weapon—and moving that off the board. But we are still going to be maintaining our own sanctions for Iranian violations of human rights and terrorism. Those don't go away. We are still going to not only be able to enforce our own sanctions, but U.N. sanctions, that are separate and apart from any nuclear sanctions, about Iran sending weapons to Hizballah or other terrorist organizations that have been designated. We're still going to have all the tools in our toolbox to go after nefarious activities by Iran in the region.

Now, do I hope that by virtue of Iran having greater commercial interactions with the world and students' exchanges taking place and perhaps a generation of Iranian leadership changing, do I hope that the character of the regime changes? Absolutely. But I'm not counting on it.

Being for this deal does not involve pie-in-the-sky hopes about Iran. We will retain all the tools that we have to go after them. What we can't do is, because this deal doesn't solve all of the problems about Iranian behavior, give up our most powerful opportunity to deal with a major part of the Iranian portfolio that would present huge problems for us, and that is them getting a nuclear weapon.

So does this deal solve every problem that we have with Iran? Not even close. Does it solve the biggest one that would cause what Prime Minister Netanyahu and others called an existential threat to Israel? That it does do. And does it ensure that—does it best ensure that we're in a position to identify what Iran is doing on its nuclear program and prevent it from weaponizing and maintaining a nonproliferation regime in the region, around the world? It does.

Enforcement of the Iran Nuclear Agreement/Interim Agreement To Prevent Iran From Developing a Nuclear Weapon

Mr. Siegal. Thank you for your answer on that one. So we've received many questions about consequences and consequences if Iran doesn't keep its end of the deal. After all, the clarity in terms of penalties for lawbreaking is a basic tenet of the American legal system. Mr. President, Mr. Mel Arnoff from California asks, "Please explain the details behind the snapback of sanctions and help us understand how the United States and its allies will effectively enforce consequences for the various infractions."

The President. This is one of the unique features of this deal. The way our negotiators structured this, we don't have to have agreement from China or Russia or even our European partners. If we determined that Iran has violated this agreement, we are in a position to reimpose all of the multilateral sanctions, not just U.S. sanctions, but the sanctions that were previously in place. We can put those all back in place by that determination.

Now, some critics have said, well, what if Iran has a small infraction or they're kind of nibbling at the edges of the deal? And are—is a future President really going to want to blow up the whole thing just for minor infractions? And what I've said—and this was actually a very thoughtful question that Congressman Nadler and some other supporters asked—what I said to them was, we're going to be in a position to continue to turn the dials and modulate other responses other than just snapping back all the sanctions if in fact Iran is not doing what it's doing.

And we actually have some precedent for this. Your listeners and viewers may not be fully aware that 2 years ago, when we announced the interim deal that allowed Iran to come into negotiations, they got some very modest relief from sanctions. They agreed not just to suspend their nuclear program, but also to get rid of the really highly enriched uranium that had been the subject of the cartoon drawing that Prime Minister Netanyahu had talked about as being the biggest threat at the United Nations.

A lot of the same critics of this current deal said at the time, this is never going to work, Iran is going to cheat, we're not going to know, they're just stalling for time, they're getting—there's going to be a floodgate of relief coming in. And we said, no, we're pretty confident we can actually monitor this thing and implement it effectively.

And today, 2 years later, even our fiercest critics acknowledge that it worked exactly the way it was supposed to. They got some modest relief. They got rid of the most highly enriched uranium stockpiles that they had. They did not install new centrifuges. We monitored what they did. And so—and during the course of these 2 years, there were a couple of times where they were too slow on something, they didn't quite do exactly what they were supposed to do. There was some ambiguities about their interpretation versus ours. And what we said was, well, until you get this fixed, you're not getting any more sanctions relief. And they fixed it pretty quick.

So we actually have tested our capacity to enforce this. And we've got some outstanding experts who helped to build the sanctions regime in the first place. And we're confident that not only can we go all the way and snap back sanctions for a very significant breach of the agreement by the Iranians, we're going to be able to also affect their incentives to make sure that they follow the rules and the spirit of this deal over the next—over the future of the deal.

Iran-U.S. Relations/Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action To Prevent Iran From Obtaining a Nuclear Weapon

Mr. Siegal. Okay. Thank you. So we're going to run out of time shortly, so we're going to maybe make this the last question depending on the answer. But you've spoken a great deal about the construct of mutual respect.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Siegal. And in the agreement itself, it makes a number of references specifically to the mutual respect of the Iranian regime to the United States, to the Europeans. And again, we've seen sort of a bending over backwards to some degree of our desire to be conscious of that, which is very worthwhile. But it does seem like the Iranian regime doesn't understand the mutual part of the mutual respect. So I'm just concerned how you feel about when you see these insults that are coming from the Ayatollah and the regime that says, "Death to America," "Death to Israel," tweets that are incredibly repugnant. Where is the mutual respect from their side?

The President. Well, I—obviously, it's not forthcoming at the moment. But the United States is the most powerful nation in the world, and the President of the United States doesn't respond to taunts. The President of the United States responds to interests, facts, evidence. And we try to make decisions based on what's going to be best for the security of the American people, our friends, our allies, and our values around the world. And so I'm less interested in terms of this deal in what the Supreme Leader says about me, more interested in what's actually happening on the ground.

You'll recall that when we were in the midst of these negotiations and they were trying to be finalized, the Supreme Leader had all sorts of characterizations about what was going to happen to the deal, and "we've outnegotiated them," and beating his chest a little bit because he's a politician. And I guess that's how politicians operate—[*laughter*]—even in Iran.

But what I was concerned about was what's in the text and what we can enforce and what we can verify to make sure they're not getting a

nuclear weapon. And at the end of the day, despite all the talk both from Iran and some of the commentary here, the text reflected the political framework that we had agreed to back in April.

And so am I troubled by these—this rhetoric? Of course. Does it speak to a deeply antagonistic and twisted world view among leadership inside of Iran? Yes. That's precisely why we can't let them have a nuclear weapon. And this is the best way to do it.

And to the broader issues—I want to emphasize this to everybody who is watching—if I lived in Israel, and I had seen rockets rain down on homes, as I've seen when I went to a place like Sderot, if my grandparents had traveled to Israel and lost family in the Holocaust and I hear somebody denying it, I've got a visceral reaction that says, how can I do business with somebody like that? I understand it. It's loathsome. And I think it's been said repeatedly—and I think as an African American I understand—history teaches us that man is—can be very cruel to man and you have to take threats seriously. But what history also teaches us is that sometimes the best security is to enter into negotiations with your enemies.

When the United States negotiated with the Soviet Union in the midst of the cold war, we had missiles trained on every major American city. And we had to give something up in that deal. We had to actually dismantle some of our arms. And so, in some ways, it was a much riskier proposition. But there was a recognition among both Democrats and Republican leaderships, farsighted, that we had the better system, that truth and values were on our side. And as long as we could maintain our capabilities and not even trust, but verify, that over time the world would shift in our direction. And we ended up winning the cold war without firing a shot directly with the Soviet Union.

So I am appreciative of the anxieties and the concerns that people have. I respect them. I'm somebody who wouldn't be sitting here if it weren't for the support of friends and supporters in the Jewish community all across this country, some of whom are watching right now, some of whom who are opposed to this deal, but are still my friends, and we'll still be playing golf, and they'll be over at a Seder dinner next year.

But I would just ask everybody to look at the facts on this. And I have now had this debate for a couple months now, examined every angle on this deal, as we did in the Situation Room exhaustively before we signed off on this deal. And the fact is, this is our best way to make sure Iran doesn't get a nuclear weapon. That should be our number-one priority.

If we are able to accomplish that and make sure that, with all the other problems that are going on in the region and all the other threats that Israel and the United States face, from ISIL and from the collapse of places like Yemen and what's happening in Syria, if we're able to take this one thing and put that away, it is going to free us up—the United States and Israel—to work together for the safety, security, and prosperity of all our people for years to come.

And so there are times where you got to overcome the emotions and look at this thing with a cold, tough assessment. And when you do that, the other side has not presented an alternative that better accomplishes that central goal. That's the reason why I'm hopeful that Members of Congress get behind this deal. And I promise you that nobody is going to have a bigger stake in implementing it effectively than me.

Mr. Greenberg. So I get to say thank you, which I'm delighted to do, first of all, for your candor. On behalf of the entire Federation system, on behalf of the Conference, we thank you for that. And I must say, I was very happy personally to hear what you just said about understanding, from your history, the plight that your people and the American people know. But our people, as you know, Mr. President, over the years, there have been a lot of tyrants who have threatened us. And unfortunately, we have to take them seriously. I know you appreciate that, and you know that sometimes what I said in my beginning remarks, people of good will always have the same objective, but there is that history there.

So I know, sir, that we've tried to gather questions. I'm not sure we were smart enough to cover the waterfront. I—and before we lose you, which we'd love to go on forever, but we know we can't, is there anything you'd like to say in closing, sir?

The President. The one thing I want to emphasize to everybody who's watching is, get informed on this. What I've said to my team—from Secretary of State Kerry to Secretary of Energy Ernie Moniz, to our individuals who manage sanctions, to Treasury Secretary Jack Lew, to my entire White House staff—is we want people to be informed. We want you to ask as many questions as you can. Because that's how confident I am that this is the right thing to do.

I think that if in fact we rejected this deal, we would be putting Iran in the driver's seat. I think they would garner enormous international sympathy. They would be able to isolate the United States and Israel as the reason for the deal falling through. I think the sanctions would begin to dissolve; they would not be as effective. So, ironically, Iran would get some of that $56 billion back anyway, and their economy would begin to improve anyway. And if in fact they are hell bent on gaining a nuclear weapon, they would have provided the cover for them then to go try to dash for the goal line without the kinds of inspections, verifications, and mechanisms of this deal.

If, on the other hand, we get this deal in place, then we will have shut off all the pathways for a minimum of 15 years. And in 15 years, if in fact the critics—what the critics say is true, and they have just been playing a waiting game, or this deal just was a pause button, I have every confidence that the President of the United States, 15 years from now, is in—going to be in a position, having made the same pledge I made—which is, Iran is not getting a nuclear weapon—to take actions that are necessary, including potentially militarily force to prevent them from getting a nuclear weapon, and will be in a stronger position to do so.

So, whatever the questions people may have, find out. This is not one of those issues where I'm interested in spinning. I just want everybody to know, the more information you have, the more confident you'll be that this is the right thing to do.

And to all my friends in the Jewish community, I want you to just understand that the—regardless of the position people are taking on this issue, the friendship, the love between the Israeli people and the American people that manifests itself in so many different ways, that's not going anywhere. That's there. And we shouldn't, for fear that that gets lost, not have a vigorous debate about this. We should welcome a vigorous debate. That's one of the things that true friendship affords: You know that you can mix it up and the next day you're going to be the best of friends. And that's who we are.

Mr. Siegal. Thank you.

The President. Thank you so much.

Mr. Greenberg. Thank you again. And we look forward to continuing this conversation, because we have so many issues of mutual concern. And I want to thank you not just for today, but you have always been available to us. And we look forward to continuing the worthwhile conversations we already have, we've had, and look forward to those in the future, sir

The President. That will continue. Thank you so much. I really enjoyed it.

Mr. Siegal. Thank you for your time. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft; and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Hoseini-Khamenei of Iran. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting an Alternative Pay Plan for Members of the Uniformed Services
August 28, 2015

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am transmitting an alternative plan for monthly basic pay increases for members of the uniformed services for 2016.

I am strongly committed to supporting our uniformed service members, who have made such great contributions to our Nation over the past decade of war. As our country continues to recover from serious economic conditions affecting the general welfare, however, we must maintain efforts to keep our Nation on a sustainable fiscal course. This effort requires tough choices, especially in light of budget constraints.

Accordingly, I have determined it is appropriate to exercise my authority under section 1009(e) of title 37, United States Code, to set the 2016 monthly basic pay increase at 1.3 percent. This decision is consistent with my fiscal year 2016 Budget and it will not materially affect the Federal Government's ability to attract and retain well-qualified members for the uniformed services.

The adjustments described above shall take effect on January 1, 2016.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting an Alternative Pay Plan for Civilian Federal Employees
August 28, 2015

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President):

I am transmitting an alternative plan for pay increases for civilian Federal employees covered by the General Schedule and certain other pay systems in January 2016.

Title 5, United States Code, authorizes me to implement alternative pay plans for pay increases for civilian Federal employees covered by the General Schedule and certain other pay systems if, because of "national emergency or serious economic conditions affecting the general welfare," I view the adjustments that would otherwise take effect as inappropriate.

Accordingly, I have determined that it is appropriate to exercise my statutory alternative plan authority under 5 U.S.C. 5303(b) and 5304a to set alternative January 2016 across-the-board and locality pay adjustments. Specifically, I have determined that for 2016, across-the-board pay increases will be 1.0 percent. Also, I will make a decision by November 30, 2015, regarding an alternative plan for locality payments under 5 U.S.C. 5304a. The alternative plan for locality payments will be limited so that the total combined cost of the 1.0 percent across-the-board base pay increase and the varying locality pay increases will be 1.3 percent of basic payroll, consistent with the assumption in my 2016 Budget. These decisions will not materially affect our ability to attract and retain a well-qualified Federal workforce.

The adjustments described above shall take effect on the first applicable pay period beginning on or after January 1, 2016.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

The President's Weekly Address
August 29, 2015

Hi, everybody. This Monday, I'm heading to Alaska for a 3-day tour of the State. Now, I've been looking forward to this for a long time, not only because Alaska is one of the most beautiful places in a country that's full of beautiful places, but because I'll have several opportunities to meet with everyday Alaskans about what's going on in their lives. I'll travel throughout the State, meeting with Alaskans who live above the Arctic Circle, with Alaska Natives, and with folks who earn their livelihoods through fishing and tourism. And I expect to learn a lot.

One thing I've learned so far is that a lot of these conversations begin with climate change. And that's because Alaskans are already living with its effects: more frequent and extensive wildfires, bigger storm surges as sea ice melts faster, some of the swiftest shoreline erosion in the world, in some places, more than 3 feet a year.

Alaska's glaciers are melting faster too, threatening tourism and adding to rising seas. And if we do nothing, Alaskan temperatures are projected to rise between 6 and 12 degrees by the end of the century, changing all sorts of industries forever.

This is all real. This is happening to our fellow Americans right now. In fact, Alaska's Governor recently told me that four villages are in "imminent danger" and have to be relocated. Already, rising sea levels are beginning to swallow one island community.

Think about that. If another country threatened to wipe out an American town, we'd do everything in our power to protect ourselves. Climate change poses the same threat right now.

That's why one of the things I'll do while I'm in Alaska is to convene other nations to meet this threat. Several Arctic nations have already committed to action. And since the United States and China worked together to set ambitious climate targets last year, leading by example, many of the world's biggest emitters have come forward with new climate plans of their own. And that's a good sign as we approach this December's global climate negotiations in Paris.

Now, one of the ways America is leading is by transitioning away from dirty energy sources that threaten our health and our environment and by going all-in on clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar. And Alaska has the natural resources to be a global leader in this effort.

Now, even as we accelerate this transition, our economy still has to rely on oil and gas. And as long as that's the case, I believe we should rely more on domestic production than on foreign imports and we should demand the highest safety standards in the industry: our own. Still, I know that there are Americans who are concerned about oil companies drilling in environmentally sensitive waters. Some are also concerned with my administration's decision to approve Shell's application to drill a well off the Alaskan coast, using leases they purchased before I took office. I share people's concerns about offshore drilling. I remember the BP spill in the Gulf of Mexico all too well.

And that's precisely why my administration has worked to make sure that our oil exploration conducted under these leases is done at the highest safety standards possible, with requirements specifically tailored to the risks of drilling off Alaska. We don't rubberstamp permits. We make it clear that Shell has to meet our high standards in how they conduct their operations, and it's a testament to how rigorously we've applied those standards that Shell has delayed and limited its exploration off Alaska while trying to meet them. The bottom line is, safety has been and will continue to be my administration's top priority when it comes to oil and gas exploration off America's precious coasts, even as we push our economy and the world to ultimately transition off of fossil fuels.

So I'm looking forward to talking with Alaskans about how we can work together to make America the leader on climate change around the globe. And we're going to offer unique

and engaging ways for you to join me on this trip all week at whitehouse.gov/Alaska. Because what's happening in Alaska is happening to us. It's our wakeup call. And as long as I'm President, America will lead the world to meet the threat of climate change before it's too late.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 1:25 p.m. on August 28 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on August 29. In the address, the President referred to Gov. William M. Walker of Alaska. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 28, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 29.

Remarks Following a Roundtable Discussion With Alaska Native Leaders in Anchorage, Alaska

August 31, 2015

Well, I am thrilled to be in Alaska. And I look forward to spending the next few days with everyday Alaskans to tell me what's going on in their lives and what's going on in this remarkable State.

I want to thank our Governor, Governor Walker, Lieutenant Governor Byron Mallott, as well as Senator Lisa Murkowski, and Secretary Sally Jewell of the Department of Interior for joining us.

But the main purpose of this meeting was to give me an opportunity to interact and listen to some of Alaska Native tribal leaders. A number of them I've met with before during the tribal summits that we've had in Washington. But this gave me a chance to focus more intensely on specifically what's happening in Alaska. And they don't just represent a large portion of Alaska's population, these are communities that have been around for 10,000 years or so. So it's worth paying attention to them because they know a little bit from all that history.

Since I took office, I've been committed to sustaining a government-to-government relationship between the United States and our tribal nations. We host tribal leaders in Washington every year. I've visited Indian Country at the Standing Rock Reservation and the Choctaw Nation. This week, we're going to be visiting two more tribal communities here in Alaska: in Dillingham and Kotzebue.

And in fact, by the end of my time in office, I'll have visited more communities—more tribal communities than any previous sitting President, which I feel pretty good about—in case anybody is keeping track. [*Laughter*]

One of the things that we've been focused on is, how can we work together and improve communication, consultation, collaboration, and participation in dealing with the issues that face Native communities? And we've made progress so far in providing support for tribal youth, expanding access to health care, improving disaster assistance, making sure that we're addressing squarely the profound issues around violence against Native women.

We've also made a couple of news announcements today. Obviously the big one was returning the most magnificent peak in our Nation to its original name—Mount Denali—something that the people of Alaska had been working on and petitioning consistently since 1970. And I'm glad that we were able to respond to that.

My administration also is taking new action to make sure that Alaska Natives have direct input into the management of Chinook salmon stocks, something that has been of great concern here.

But one of the biggest things that I heard during this discussion was the need for us to work more intensively and more collaboratively with communities, particularly in rural areas, that are burdened by crippling energy costs, that are obviously continually concerned about hunting and fishing rights and their ability to sustain their way of life in the face of profound climate change that's taking place—taking

place, in fact, faster—twice as fast here in Alaska as it is in the lower 48.

And so, in addition to initiatives around renewable energy and how we can be more creative in helping local communities deal with high energy costs and bringing them down, housing construction that's more energy efficient, that can save people money, we're also going to be paying a lot of attention to how we can work together and tap into the wisdom and knowledge of tribal communities in managing and conserving land in the face of what is a profound global challenge.

Many of the issues that were raised here—everything from voting rights to land trusts—are issues that my agencies will be following up with on an ongoing basis. And we've already had a lot of visits from various Cabinet Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries, working with the people around this table. That's going to continue for as long as I remain President. And hopefully, we will have set a new pattern and a new set of relationships that will extend well beyond my own Presidency, because when it comes to the First Americans, how we interact with these communities says a lot about who we are as a country. And I think the people of Alaska understand that as well as anybody.

So again, I want to thank all the leadership here for everything that they've done in working with us. I want to thank you for all the great ideas that you offered. And I want to thank the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and the Senator for their participation as well. They obviously feel very deeply about these issues in their home State as well.

All right? Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you, pool.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:22 p.m. at the Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center.

Remarks at the Global Leadership in the Arctic: Cooperation, Innovation, Engagement and Resilience (GLACIER) Conference in Anchorage

August 31, 2015

Thank you so much. Thank you. Please. Well, it is wonderful to be here in the great State of Alaska.

I want to thank Secretary Kerry and members of my administration for your work here today. Thank you to the many Alaskans, Alaska Natives, and other indigenous peoples of the Arctic who have traveled a long way, in many cases, to share your insights and your experiences. And to all the Foreign Ministers and delegations who have come here from around the world, welcome to the United States, and thank you all for attending this GLACIER Conference.

The actual name of the conference is much longer. It's a mouthful, but the acronym works because it underscores the incredible changes that are taking place here in the Arctic that have impact not just the nations that surround the Arctic, but have an impact for the entire world, as well.

I want to thank the people of Alaska for hosting this conference. I look forward to visiting more of Alaska over the next couple of days. The United States is, of course, an Arctic nation. And even if this isn't an official gathering of the Arctic Council, the United States is proud to chair the Arctic Council for the next 2 years. And to all the foreign dignitaries who are here, I want to be very clear: We are eager to work with your nations on the unique opportunities that the Arctic presents and the unique challenges that it faces. We are not going to—any of us—be able to solve these challenges by ourselves. We can only solve them together.

Of course, we're here today to discuss a challenge that will define the contours of this century more dramatically than any other, and that's the urgent and growing threat of a changing climate.

Our understanding of climate change advances each day. Human activity is disrupting the climate, in many ways faster than we

previously thought. The science is stark. It is sharpening. It proves that this once-distant threat is now very much in the present.

In fact, the Arctic is the leading edge of climate change, our leading indicator of what the entire planet faces. Arctic temperatures are rising about twice as fast as the global average. Over the past 60 years, Alaska has warmed about twice as fast as the rest of the United States. Last year was Alaska's warmest year on record, just as it was for the rest of the world. And the impacts here are very real.

Thawing permafrost destabilizes the earth on which a hundred thousand Alaskans live, threatening homes, damaging transportation and energy infrastructure, which could cost billions of dollars to fix.

Warmer, more acidic oceans and rivers and the migration of entire species threatens the livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local economies dependent on fishing and tourism. Reduced sea levels leaves villages unprotected from floods and storm surges. Some are in imminent danger; some will have to relocate entirely. In fact, Alaska has some of the swiftest shoreline erosion rates in the world.

I recall what one Alaska Native told me at the White House a few years ago. He said: "Many of our villages are ready to slide off into the waters of Alaska, and in some cases, there will be absolutely no hope. We will need to move many villages."

Alaska's fire season is now more than a month longer than it was in 1950. At one point this summer, more than 300 wildfires were burning at once. Southeast of here, in our Pacific Northwest, even the rainforest is on fire. More than 5 million acres in Alaska have already been scorched by fire this year. That's an area about the size of Massachusetts. If you add the fires across Canada and Siberia, we're talking 300 [30]* million acres, an area about the size of New York.

This is a threat to many communities, but it's also an immediate and ongoing threat to the men and women who put their lives on the line to protect ours. Less than 2 weeks ago, three highly trained firefighters lost their lives fighting a fire in Washington State. Another has been in critical condition. We are thankful to each and every firefighter for their heroism, including the Canadian firefighters who've helped fight the fires in this State.

But the point is, is that climate change is no longer some far-off problem. It is happening here. It is happening now. Climate change is already disrupting our agriculture and ecosystems, our water and food supplies, our energy, our infrastructure, human health, human safety. Now, today. And climate change is a trend that affects all trends: economic trends, security trends. Everything will be impacted. And it becomes more dramatic with each passing year.

Already, it's changing the way Alaskans live. And considering the Arctic's unique role in influencing the global climate, it will accelerate changes to the way that we all live. Since 1979, the summer sea ice in the Arctic has decreased by more than 40 percent, a decrease that has dramatically accelerated over the past two decades. One new study estimates that Alaska's glaciers alone lose about 75 gigatons—that's 75 billion tons—of ice each year.

To put that in perspective, one scientist described a gigaton of ice as a block the size of the National Mall in Washington, from Congress all the way to the Lincoln Memorial, four times as tall as the Washington Monument. Now imagine 75 of those ice blocks. That's what Alaska's glaciers alone lose each year. The pace of melting is only getting faster. It's now twice what it was between 1950 and 2000—twice as fast as it was just a little over a decade ago. And it's one of the reasons why sea levels rose by about 8 inches over the last century and why are they projected to rise another 1 to 4 feet this century.

Consider, as well, that many of the fires burning today are actually burning through the permafrost in the Arctic. So this permafrost stores massive amounts of carbon. When the permafrost is no longer permanent, when it thaws or burns, these gases are released into

* White House correction.

our atmosphere over time, and that could mean that the Arctic may become a new source of emissions that further accelerates global warming.

So, if we do nothing, temperatures in Alaska are projected to rise between 6 and 12 degrees by the end of the century, triggering more melting, more fires, more thawing of the permafrost, a negative feedback loop, a cycle—warming leading to more warming—that we do not want to be a part of. And the fact is that climate is changing faster than our efforts to address it. That, ladies and gentlemen, must change. We're not acting fast enough.

I've come here today, as the leader of the world's largest economy and its second largest emitter, to say that the United States recognizes our role in creating this problem, and we embrace our responsibility to help solve it. And I believe we can solve it. That's the good news. Even if we cannot reverse the damage that we've already caused, we have the means—the scientific imagination and technological innovation—to avoid irreparable harm.

We know this because last year, for the first time in our history, the global economy grew and global carbon emissions stayed flat. So we're making progress, we're just not making it fast enough.

Here in the United States, we're trying to do our part. Since I took office 6½ years ago, the United States has made ambitious investments in clean energy and ambitious reductions in our carbon emissions. We now harness three times as much electricity from wind and 20 times as much from the sun. Alaskans now lead the world in the development of hybrid wind energy systems from remote grids, and it's expanding its solar and biomass resources.

We've invested in energy efficiency in every imaginable way: in our buildings, our cars, our trucks, our homes, even the appliances inside them. We're saving consumers billions of dollars along the way. Here in Alaska, more than 15,000 homeowners have cut their energy bills by 30 percent on average. And that collectively saves Alaskans more than $50 million each year. We've helped communities build climate-resilient infrastructure to prepare for the impacts of climate change that we can no longer prevent.

Earlier this month, I announced the first set of nationwide standards to end the limitless dumping of carbon pollution from our power plants. It's the single most important step America has ever taken on climate change. And over the course of the coming days, I intend to speak more about the particular challenges facing Alaska and the United States as an Arctic power, and I intend to announce new measures to address them.

So we are working hard to do our part to meet this challenge. And in doing so, we're proving that there doesn't have to be a conflict between a sound environment and strong economic growth. But we're not moving fast enough. None of the nations represented here are moving fast enough.

And let's be honest, there's always been an argument against taking action. The notion is, somehow, this will curb our economic growth. And at a time when people are anxious about the economy, that's an argument oftentimes for inaction. We don't want our lifestyles disrupted. In countries where there remains significant poverty, including here in the United States, the notion is, can we really afford to prioritize this issue? The irony, of course, is, is that few things will disrupt our lives as profoundly as climate change. Few things can have as negative an impact on our economy as climate change.

On the other hand, technology has now advanced to the point where any economic disruption from transitioning to a cleaner, more efficient economy is shrinking by the day. Clean energy and energy efficiency aren't just proving cost-effective, but also cost-saving. The unit costs of things like solar are coming down rapidly. But we're still underinvesting in it.

Many of America's biggest businesses recognize the opportunities and are seizing them. They're choosing a new route. And a growing number of American homeowners are choosing to go solar every day. It works. All told, America's economy has grown more than 60 percent over the last 20 years, but our carbon

emissions are roughly back to where they were 20 years ago. So we know how to use less dirty fuel and grow our economy at the same time. But we're not moving fast enough.

More Americans every day are doing their part though. Thanks to their efforts, America will reach the emission target that I sent 6 years ago. We're going to reduce our carbon emissions in the range of 17 percent below 2005 levels by 2020. And that's why, last year, I set a new target: America is going to reduce our emissions 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels by 10 years from now.

And that was part of a historic joint announcement we made last year in Beijing. The United States will double the pace at which we cut our emissions, and China committed, for the first time, to limiting its emissions. Because the world's two largest economies and two largest emitters came together, we're now seeing other nations stepping up aggressively as well. And I'm determined to make sure that American leadership continues to drive international action, because we can't do this alone. Even America and China together cannot do this alone. Even all the countries represented around here cannot do this alone. We have to do it together.

This year, in Paris, has to be the year that the world finally reaches an agreement to protect the one planet that we've got while we still can.

So let me sum up. We know that human activity is changing the climate. That is beyond dispute. Everything else is politics if people are denying the facts of climate change. We can have a legitimate debate about how we are going to address this problem; we cannot deny the science. We also know the devastating consequences if the current trend lines continue. That is not deniable. And we are going to have to do some adaptation, and we are going to have to help communities be resilient. Because some of these trend lines we are not going to be able to stop on a dime, we're not going to be able to stop tomorrow.

But if those trend lines continue the way they are, there's not going to be a nation on this Earth that's not impacted negatively. People will suffer. Economies will suffer. Entire nations will find themselves under severe, severe problems: more drought, more floods, rising sea levels, greater migration, more refugees, more scarcity, more conflict.

That's one path we can take. The other path is to embrace the human ingenuity that can do something about it. This is within our power. This is a solvable problem if we start now. And we're starting to see that enough consensus is being built internationally and within each of our own body politics that we may have the political will, finally, to get moving.

So the time to heed the critics and the cynics and the deniers is past. The time to plead ignorance is surely past. Those who want to ignore the science, they are increasingly alone. They are on their own shrinking island. [*Laughter*]

So—[*applause*]—and let's remember, even beyond the climate benefits of pursuing cleaner energy sources and more resilient, energy-efficient ways of living, the byproduct of it is, is that we also make our air cleaner and safer for our children to breathe. We're also making our economies more resilient to energy shocks on global markets. We're also making our countries less reliant on unstable parts of the world. We are gradually powering a planet on its way to 9 billion humans in a more sustainable way.

These are good things. This is not simply a danger to be avoided, this is an opportunity to be seized. But we have to keep going. We're making a difference, but we have to keep going. We are not moving fast enough.

If we were to abandon our course of action, if we stop trying to build a clean energy economy and reduce carbon pollution, if we do nothing to keep the glaciers from melting faster and oceans from rising faster and forests from burning faster and storms from growing stronger, we will condemn our children to a planet beyond their capacity to repair: submerged countries, abandoned cities, fields no longer growing. Indigenous peoples who can't carry out traditions that stretch back millennia. Entire industries of people who can't practice their livelihoods. Desperate refugees seeking the sanctuary of nations not their own. Political

disruptions that could trigger multiple conflicts around the globe.

That's not a future of strong economic growth. That is not a future where freedom and human rights are on the move. Any leader willing to take a gamble on a future like that, any so-called leader who does not take this issue seriously or treats it like a joke, is not fit to lead.

On this issue, of all issues, there is such a thing as being too late. And that moment is almost upon us. That's why we're here today. That's what we have to convey to our people—tomorrow and the next day and the day after that. And that's what we have to do when we meet in Paris later this year. It will not be easy. There are hard questions to answer. I am not trying to suggest that there are not going to be difficult transitions that we all have to make. But if we unite our highest aspirations, if we make our best efforts to protect this planet for future generations, we can solve this problem.

And when you leave this conference center, I hope you look around. I hope you have the chance to visit a glacier. Or just look out your airplane window as you depart and take in the God-given majesty of this place. For those of you flying to other parts of the world, do it again when you're flying over your home countries. Remind yourself that there will come a time when your grandkids—and mine, if I'm lucky enough to have some—they'll want to see this. They'll want to experience it, just as we've gotten to do in our own lives. They deserve to live lives free from fear and want and peril. And ask yourself, are you doing everything you can to protect it? Are we doing everything we can to make their lives safer and more secure and more prosperous?

Let's prove that we care about them and their long-term futures, not just short-term political expediency.

I had a chance to meet with some Native peoples before I came in here, and they described for me villages that are slipping into the sea and the changes that are taking place: changing migratory patterns; the changing fauna so that what used to feed the animals that they, in turn, would hunt or fish beginning to vanish. It's urgent for them today. But that is the future for all of us if we don't take care.

Your presence here today indicates your recognition of that. But it's not enough just to have conferences. It's not enough just to talk the talk. We've got to walk the walk. We've got work to do, and we've got to do it together.

So thank you. And may God bless all of you and your countries. And thank you, Alaska, for your wonderful hospitality. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5 p.m. at the Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Richard Wheeler, Andrew Zajac, and Tom Zbyszewski, U.S. Forest Service firefighters who died attempting to control the Twisp Fire in Okanogan County, WA; Daniel Lyon, Jr., a U.S. Forest Service firefighter undergoing treatment for severe burns at the Harborview Medical Center in Seattle, WA; and Meredith Nettles, associate professor of earth and environmental sciences, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory at Columbia University.

Remarks at Exit Glacier in Kenai Fjords National Park in Seward, Alaska
September 1, 2015

So you guys have been seeing these signs as we've walked that mark where the glacier used to be: 1917, 1951. This glacier has lost about a mile and a half over the last couple hundred years. But the pace of the reductions of the glacier are accelerating rapidly each and every year. And this is as good of a signpost of what we're dealing with when it comes to climate change as just about anything.

This is one of the most studied glaciers because it's so easily accessible. But what it indicates, because of the changing patterns of winters with less snow, longer, hotter summers, is how rapidly the glacier is receding. And it sends a message about the urgency that we're going to

need to have when it comes to dealing with this, because obviously, when the glaciers erode, that's also a sign of the amount of water that's being introduced into the oceans, rising sea levels. And the warming generally is having an impact on the flora and fauna of this national park.

It is spectacular though. And we want to make sure that our grandkids can see this.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1 p.m.

Remarks Prior to a Boat Tour of Kenai Fjords National Park in Seward
September 1, 2015

We're going to go out and look at some of these spectacular fjords on one of our Coast Guard cutters. But before we go out, I just wanted to mention that one of the things we've been trying to highlight during this trip is the changing nature of the Arctic, partly as a consequence of climate change. There's a whole series of strategic implications—economic and national security—and one of the things that we have to think about is how do we maintain our capabilities when it comes to maritime issues and commerce.

After World War II, we had seven icebreakers: four under the Navy, three under the Coast Guard. Today, in part because we haven't been reinvesting, although we technically have three, operationally, we really only have two, and only one heavy icebreaker. Just to give you a sense of contrast, Russia has about 40, and 11 icebreakers either planned or under construction.

Now, in light of the changes that are going to be taking place and the fact that we're going to be seeing more commercial vessels going through the Arctic, even if we're on top of the climate change issues, some of the change is already happening and is going to be inevitable. It's important that we are prepared so that whether it's for search-and-rescue missions, whether it's for national security reasons, whether it's for commercial reasons, that we have much greater capabilities than we currently have.

So one of the things that I'm announcing today is a proposal to accelerate the construction of at least one additional heavy icebreaker and to work with Congress to make sure that we are producing a sufficient fleet to meet our economic, commercial, maritime, and national security needs.

And this is something that's been championed by Republicans like Senator Sullivan here in Alaska, but also Democrats like Maria Cantwell in Washington. We think that we should be able to generate some bipartisan support, although it's going to be a lot easier to do if we are not continuing to labor under the burdens of sequester that threaten our domestic priorities and investments, but also burden our military and our national security long-term investments.

These icebreakers are examples of something that we need to get on line now. They can't wait. And I'm looking forward to trying to work with Congress to make that happen. All right?

Enjoy the trip, guys. Stay warm out there.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:24 p.m. at Seward Harbor.

Remarks Following a Visit With Fishermen in Dillingham, Alaska
September 2, 2015

The President. Let me just say something real quick. Wait. Do I need—can you guys get—catch me from here? The—so, obviously, we're thankful for the incredible display of fishing skill that has been built up over hundreds of years. And all the folks here engage in subsistence fishing, which is part of the traditional way of life for so many here on Bristol Bay.

Even though we've got a cloudy day, I think everybody has a sense of how beautiful this place is. And the scale of fish that come through here is remarkable. If you catch—or if you've eaten wild salmon, it's likely to have come from here. And this has some of the biggest salmon runs, sockeye, in the world. And it's part of the reason why it's so critical that we make sure that we protect this incredible natural resource, not just for the people whose livelihood depends on it, but for the entire country. About 40 percent of the wild-caught seafood in America is caught right here on Bristol Bay.

And it represents not just a critical way of life that has to be preserved, but it also represents one of the most important natural resources that the United States has. This is one of the reasons why we have shut off oil and gas exploration in this region. It is too fragile, and it is too important——

Audience member. Thank you.

The President. ——for us to be able to endanger it in any sort of way. And this is something that obviously has strong support for the people whose livelihoods depend on it and for the people of Alaska.

But there are other threats to this environment that we've always got to be alert to. And hopefully, by us coming here, we're highlighting the need for us to keep this pristine and make sure that this is there for the children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren of all these wonderful fishermen.

So we very much appreciate it. And by the way, that fish jerky, outstanding. [*Laughter*] So I strongly recommend it. You guys should get some samples before you get out of here.

Audience member. Yes. Please do. Please, and you're welcome to have some more.

The President. Thank you, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:34 p.m. on Kanakanak Beach.

Remarks at N&N Market in Dillingham
September 2, 2015

[*The President greeted store patrons and then made remarks as follows*.]

So the—one of the reasons we stopped by, along with Ralph, is just to highlight the fact that obviously this is a great grocery store, folks who do great work, but because everything has to be shipped in, the costs for folks living in Dillingham and a lot of the villages along Bristol Bay end up being extraordinary. You're looking at prices that are double, in some cases, or even higher for basic necessities like milk, like orange juice, like other produce.

That's part of the reason why the subsistence economy is so important and why fishing is so important. But it's also why folks like Ralph and some of the various tribal organizations are trying to do more economic development in the area in order to start making some of these things more affordable, but also having more locally produced stuff that can end up cutting prices and create jobs in the region. So we're going to be working on some ideas on economic development in the region.

But in the meantime, if you need something—I thought the press corps might need to get some supplies. Feel free to grab something. We're not going to be here too long though. I'm going to be shaking some hands. All right. Thank you.

[*The President continued to greet patrons.*]

Well, it's so nice to be here, everybody. We appreciate you. And hopefully, I'll be able to bring Michelle and the girls back sometime soon. All right. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:02 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Ralph Anderson, chief executive officer, Bristol Bay Native Association.

Remarks at Kotzebue Middle/High School in Kotzebue, Alaska
September 2, 2015

The President. Hello, Alaska! Hello, Kotzebue! Go Huskies! Thank you so much! Thank you for that wonderful, wonderful reception. Please give Millie a big round of applause for the great job.

Everybody, have a seat. Have a seat. Just relax. I'm going to be here for a while. [*Laughter*]

Well, it is wonderful to be in Alaska. And I look forward to spending some quality time here. And I've gotten such a wonderful welcome all across the State, so I want to thank all of you. Thanks to the mayor of the Northwest Arctic Borough, Reggie Joule. Where's Reggie? Reggie, right here. Your mayor, Maija Lukin. I want to acknowledge the presence of our Lieutenant Governor here—thank you so much, Byron Mallott. And all of you for the warm Iñupiaq reception here in Kotzebue. We are so grateful. Thank you.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. I think that's a good thing, whatever happened right here. [*Laughter*] When you're President, you never know. [*Laughter*] Sometimes, you get some hecklers. [*Laughter*]

I did have my team look into what other Presidents have done when they visited Alaska. I'm not the first President to come to Alaska. Warren Harding spent more than 2 weeks here, which I would love to do. But I can't leave Congress alone that long. [*Laughter*] Something might happen. When FDR visited—Franklin Delano Roosevelt—his opponents started a rumor that he left his dog Fala on the Aleutian Islands and spent 20 million taxpayer dollars to send a destroyer to pick him up. Now, I'm astonished that anybody would make something up about a President. [*Laughter*] But FDR did not take it lying down. He said: "I don't resent attacks, and my family doesn't resent attacks. But Fala does resent attacks. He's not been the same dog since." [*Laughter*]

President Carter did some fishing when he visited. And I wouldn't mind coming back to Alaska to do some fly fishing someday. You cannot see Alaska in 3 days. It's too big. It's too vast. It's too diverse. So I'm going to have to come back. I may not be President anymore, but hopefully, I still get a pretty good reception. I'm going to—the—[*applause*]. And just in case, I'll bring Michelle, who I know will get a good reception.

In fact, on Monday, Governor Walker and Byron personally gave me a fishing license. Thank you, Lieutenant Governor. I think it expires, though, pretty quick, and I haven't gotten out there yet. [*Laughter*]

But there's one thing no American President has done before, and that's travel above the Arctic Circle. So I couldn't be prouder to be the first and to spend some time with all of you.

Before I begin my remarks, I want to thank our veterans who are in the audience, because we have so many Alaska Natives who serve our country and defend us. And in fact, I've met some World War II vets and Korean war vets. And we want to make sure that they know how much we appreciate everything that they've done on our behalf. So we appreciate them very much.

And I want to thank everybody in Kotzebue for something else, which is taking such good care of my team over the past week. I know that when I come to town there are a lot of people who come first, and it's a big footprint. But all of them have told me incredible stories of your kindness. I heard that you stuffed them full of all kinds of meat at Caribou fest. [*Laughter*] John Baker, who was the winner of the 2011 Iditarod, let them play with his Husky puppies. I heard about offers to go berry picking on the tundra, last night's cultural night. And I heard that you're even teaching them some Iñupiaq. I don't know how good they are. [*Laughter*] They're probably a little better than me. But the teams that advance my trip, they spend a lot of time far away from home. They do great work. Most of them are really young people. So I just want to say thank you to all of you for making them feel so at home even when they're 4,000 miles away.

So I've had a great week here in Alaska. Flying in on Monday, I had the view of something extraordinary from Air Force One: "the Great One," Denali. We restored its Alaska Native name. I know that it's been a long time coming for Alaskans. I've had a chance to sit in the cockpit of a floatplane. But the Secret Service didn't let me fly it. [*Laughter*] I still enjoyed it. We had a chance to hike to the Exit Glacier in Kenai Fjords National Park. I went out on Resurrection Bay and saw dolphins and a humpback whale and otters and puffins.

And in Dillingham, just earlier today, I watched Alaska Native fishermen bring in their salmon catch and a tribal elder prepare it in the traditional way. I had a chance to visit a middle school where Alaska Native youth performed a traditional Yup'ik dance. And I participated. It's on video.

So the warmth and hospitality has been incredible, and I'm so grateful for it.

We talk a lot about the pioneering, independent spirit of America. It's something that we're very proud of as Americans. But what's clear is that, up here, it's not just a spirit, it's not just a slogan, it's a way of life. The—and it is out of necessity. You've got to be self-reliant up here. You can't just drive down to the shopping mall to get what you need. Help, if you need it, is a long way away. This far north, everybody has to look out for each other. And even with all those efforts, there's still isolation, and there's poverty, and it can be harsh.

And that means that you depend on each other. It makes family and community and tradition all the more important. Now, I grew up in Hawaii, which obviously, the weather is a little different. [*Laughter*] But there's a similarity, what's called the Aloha spirit there. And I know you have the same spirit here, the notion that we're all in this together. And that's all the more profound in a place above the Arctic Circle.

We know that Alaska is big, and sometimes, I have to describe for people in the lower 48, if you dropped it on the lower 48, it would stretch from Florida to California, from the Dakotas to Texas. That's how big it is. So the people of Alaska can be just as different as all the differences that exist across America. But even though we all look different and come from different places and believe in different things, we all stand united around some similar values. We all want a chance at opportunity. We all want to be able to pass down our traditions and our culture and our language to our kids. We all want the same chance at the American Dream as everybody else.

We believe that every community deserves access to great jobs. And that's why, to boost commerce in the Arctic and to maintain America's status as an Arctic power, we've called for the accelerated replacement of the Coast Guard's heavy-duty icebreaker, and we're planning for construction of more icebreakers. And I'm urging Congress to make sure we've got the resources to do this. To boost tourism, I'm asking Congress to speed up maintenance and modernization of our national parks in time for the centennial next year, including right here in Alaska.

We believe every child deserves a shot at a great education. One of the initiatives I'm proudest of is something we call ConnectEd, and it's a program we started to close the technology gaps in our schools and connect 99 percent of America's students to high-speed Internet by the year 2018. And if you want to see the difference this can make in a child's life, look at Nanwalek, on Alaska's southern coast. It is remote. Like a lot of Alaskan communities, you can only get there by boat or by plane. But today, with the help of Apple, all 80 of its students, most of whom are Native—Alaska Natives, now learn in classrooms with fast Internet and iPads and digital content. Most of these kids don't have Internet at home. But in the classroom, they've got the tools to compete with any child around the world.

And I know you're taking advantage of this program here in Kotzebue, with wireless Internet and 3–D printing. And that's great, because that's what we want for all these kids. We want nothing less than the best. And as President, one of the reasons I'm here is to tell you that I'm behind those efforts. I want to make sure these young people know we care about them and we're fighting for them.

We believe every American deserves access to quality, affordable health care. And since I signed the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare—[*laughter*]—we signed it 5½ years ago—since then, 16 million Americans have gotten covered. More than 18,000 Alaskans have been able to purchase private plans through healthcare.gov. Thanks to the leadership of Governor Walker and Lieutenant Governor Mallott, another 17,000 are projected to gain access to health insurance under Medicaid next year. So we appreciate that. And that means more Alaskans can get things like mammograms and physicals. And it means fewer Alaskans will go broke just because they get sick. It will save this State an estimated $20 million in costs of care for people who can't afford to pay for it. So it's going to make a difference.

We also believe in being good stewards of our land and our planet for the next generation. And that's what I want to spend the rest of my time talking about. One of the reasons I came up here is to really focus on what is probably the biggest challenge our planet faces. If there's one thing that threatens opportunity and prosperity for everybody, wherever we live, it's the threat of a changing climate.

I don't need to tell people here in Alaska what's happening. And over the past few years, I've been trying to make the rest of the country more aware of a changing climate, but you're already living it. You've got longer, more dangerous fire seasons in Alaska, thawing permafrost that threatens homes and infrastructure. Faster glacier melt. Rising seas. Melting sea ice that contributes to some of the fastest coastal erosion in the world.

I met Alaska Natives whose way of life that they've practiced for centuries is in danger of slipping away. On Monday, one Alaska Native woman told me she doesn't want her way of life to go on the endangered species list. And I've talked with folks whose villages are literally in danger of slipping away.

So, on my way here, I flew over the island of Kivalina, which is already receding into the ocean. That's what Millie was talking about. Waves sweep across the entire island at times, from one side clear across the other. And for many of those Alaskans, it's no longer a question of if they're going to relocate, but when.

And think about it: If another country threatened to wipe out an American town, we'd do everything in our power to protect it. Well, climate change poses the same threat right now. And that's why I care so deeply about this. If we do nothing, temperatures in Alaska are projected to rise between 6 and 12 degrees by the end of the century. That means more melting, more fires, more erosion, more thawing of the permafrost, more warming after that. And it threatens all of us with hardship, not just people up north.

There aren't many other places in America that have to deal with those questions right now. But there will be. And what's happening here is America's wakeup call. It should be the world's wakeup call. And that's why, over the past 6 years, we've been working to do something about it. We are the number-one producer of oil and gas. But we're transitioning away from energy that creates the carbon that's warming the planet and threatening our health and our environment, and we're going all in on clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar. And Alaska has the natural resources to be a global leader in this effort.

America right now harnesses three times as much electricity from the wind and 20 times as much from the sun as we did back in 2008. That's how much progress we've already made. And Alaskans now lead the world in the development of hybrid wind energy systems for remote grids, which help, obviously, villages that aren't hooked up to a big power grid. And you're expanding your solar and biomass resources. So Kodiak Island, for example, recently achieved 99.7 percent of its electricity from renewable sources. Its wind power alone displaces more than 2 million gallons of diesel fuel every year. So people are saving money and helping the environment. And today Kodiak Island announced a $3 million public-private partnership that will make the island the first in the world to adopt new technology that lets it stabilize and store the energy it generates from the wind.

And I know you guys have started putting up solar panels and wind turbines around Kotzebue. And because energy costs are pretty severe up here, for remote Alaskan communities, one of the biggest problems is high energy costs. So we're going to deploy more new clean energy projects on Native lands, and that's going to reduce dependence on fossil fuels, promote new jobs and new growth in your communities.

We've also invested in energy efficiency in every imaginable way: in our buildings, in our cars, our trucks, our homes, our appliances. And all that saves billions of dollars for consumers along the way. So more than 15,000 Alaska homeowners have cut their energy bills by 30 percent on average, and that saves folks here in Alaska more than $50 million a year.

Anchorage became the first city in the world to replace more than a quarter of its roadway lighting with LED lighting, and that saves the city $260,000 a year, cuts its energy consumption from lighting by nearly 60 percent. In the town of Tok, the school district replaced its expensive diesel heating and power systems with one fueled by biomass; saved enough money to rehire the counselor, the music teacher, and the boiler operator. That's a good story.

And last month, I announced the first set of nationwide standards to end the limitless carbon emissions from our power plants. And that's the most important step we've ever taken on climate change.

So the good news is, we've made a lot of progress in the last 6 years. But I'm here to tell you we've got to do more. We've got to move faster. We're not moving fast enough. And for the sake of our kids, we've got to keep going. America has to lead the world in transitioning to a clean energy economy.

Now, as we make this transition, we've also got to take more seriously our obligation to help those communities that are already at risk so that they can become more resilient in the face of climate change. Because some of it we're not going to be able to avoid. The planet is already getting warmer. And so communities are already going to be affected, and that's especially pressing here in Alaska.

And that's why today I'm announcing that the Denali Commission will serve as a central coordinator in building what we call climate resilience, helping people adapt. And this is going to cut through bureaucracy and redtape, frees up communities like yours to develop and implement solutions for events like coastal erosion and flooding, and permafrost degradation. And the Denali Commission is also committing $2 million to support voluntary relocation efforts for vulnerable rural communities. The Department of Housing and Urban Development is going to consult with Arctic coastal tribes, on a nation-to-nation basis, on your unique needs.

And we're also going to help communities build more resilient infrastructure. You shouldn't wait until disaster strikes. We should see if we can invest in communities before the disaster strikes to prevent it.

So today we're announcing more than $17 million in USDA rural water grants for infrastructure projects in remote Alaskan communities, including one right here in Kotzebue. And we're launching a new competition to support cutting-edge energy efficiency solutions. So the Department of Energy is going to offer technical assistance and advice. If your communities come up with the best strategy for sustainable, efficient energy that's tailored for your community, you're going to get Federal support to make your plans a reality.

And to help Alaskans better plan for sustainable development, the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency and the National Science Foundation are leading a public-private collaboration to create the first-ever publicly available, high-resolution, satellite-based elevation map of Alaska by next year and the entire Arctic by the year after that so that we know exactly what's taking place all across this great State.

So, before we came up here, we had a conference down in Anchorage, not just with Americans but from—leaders from around the world. And I told them that when it comes to climate change, there is such a thing as being too late. The effects can be irreversible if we don't act. And that moment is almost here. And you know this better than anybody. I want you

to know, as your President, I'm here to make sure that you get the support that you need. But we should be optimistic about what can be accomplished, because there's nothing that we can't do if we work together. America is full of dreamers. We push new frontiers by choice. That's what makes us Americans. Whether we live in the Arctic Circle or on the Hawaiian Islands, whether we're in big cities or small towns, we're one people. And our future is only as good as the efforts that we put into it.

But when people are determined and hopeful and generous, as the people here in Kotzebue are, it makes me optimistic. It tells me that this country's best days are still ahead.

So I want to thank all of you. I especially want to thank the young people for being here today. Thank you, Kotzebue. God bless you. God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:45 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Millie Hawley, president, Kivalina Tribal Council, who introduced the President.

Statement on the 70th Anniversary of the End of World War II in the Pacific
September 2, 2015

Today we commemorate the 70th anniversary of the formal end of World War II in the Pacific, a conflict that tragically claimed millions of lives across Asia and Oceania and stretched several months beyond the war's conclusion in the European theater. We salute the American service men and women of the "greatest generation" who answered the call of duty in the Pacific, as well as the allied forces with whom they served. We remember those who endured unimaginable suffering as prisoners of war, and we honor the ultimate sacrifice of more than 100,000 U.S. servicemembers who laid down their lives in the Pacific theater to defend our Nation and advance the cause of freedom. To them and to the 16 million Americans who served in the Second World War—those who are no longer with us and our proud veterans today—our debt of gratitude can never be repaid. We live in freedom because of their brave service.

The end of the war marked the beginning of a new era in America's relationship with Japan. As Prime Minister Abe and I noted during his visit in April, the relationship between our two countries over the last 70 years stands as a model of the power of reconciliation: former adversaries who have become steadfast allies and who work together to advance common interests and universal values in Asia and globally. Seventy years ago, this partnership was unimaginable. Today it is a fitting reflection of our shared interests, capabilities, and values, and I am confident that it will continue to deepen in the decades to come.

Statement on Representative John P. Kline, Jr.'s Decision Not To Seek Reelection
September 3, 2015

During his 25 years in the Marine Corps and more than a decade in Congress, John Kline has served his country and his constituents with honor and distinction. He's the proud husband of an Army nurse and the proud father of two children, including a son who has served multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. John's never been afraid to stand up for what he believes in, and as the chairman of the House Education Committee, he's shown a willingness to work together with anybody—Republican or Democrat—who has the best interests of our students at heart. I look forward to continuing to work with John in the coming months, especially as we continue our efforts to give every child in

America the fair shot in life they deserve, and I wish him and Vicky well in whatever their future holds.

NOTE: The statement referred to J. Daniel Kline and Katherine Kline Danner, children of Rep. Kline.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With King Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia

September 4, 2015

President Obama. Well, it's a great pleasure to welcome His Majesty King Salman to the Oval Office. This is the latest of several meetings that I've had with His Majesty. And the fact that he has chosen to take this first visit to the United States is indicative of the longstanding friendship between the United States and Saudi Arabia.

This is obviously a challenging time in world affairs, particularly in the Middle East, and so we expect this to be a substantive conversation across a wide range of issues. We share a concern about Yemen and the need to restore a functioning government that is inclusive and that can relieve the humanitarian situation there.

We share concerns about the crisis in Syria, and we'll have the opportunity to discuss how we can arrive at a political transition process within Syria that can finally end the horrific conflict there.

We continue to cooperate extremely closely in countering terrorist activity in the region and around the world, including our battle against ISIL. And we'll discuss the importance of effectively implementing the deal to ensure that Iran does not have a nuclear weapon, while counteracting its destabilizing activities in the region.

We'll also have an opportunity to discuss the world economy and energy issues. And I look forward to continuing to deepen our cooperation on issues like education and clean energy and science and climate change because His Majesty is interested, obviously, ultimately in making sure that his people, particularly young people, have prosperity and opportunity into the future. And we share those hopes and those dreams for those young people, and I look forward to hearing his ideas on how we can be helpful.

So, Your Majesty, welcome, and let me once again reaffirm not only our personal friendship, but the deep and abiding friendship between our two peoples.

Shukran.

King Salman. Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you for allowing us to enjoy your hospitality. I intended to make my first official visit to the United States as a symbol of the deep and strong relationship that we have with the United States. It's indeed historic relations that go back to the day when King Abd al-Aziz met with President Roosevelt in 1945.

Our relationship is beneficial not only to our two countries, but to the entire world and to our region. And this is significant, and we must always affirm that and deepen such relations. We always emphasize that we want to deepen our relations and further our cooperation in all fields.

As you know, Mr. President, our economy is a free economy, and therefore, we must allow opportunities for businesspeople to exchange opportunities, because if people see that there are common interests, they will further themselves the relations between them. And our relationship must be beneficial to both of us, not only on the economic field, but on the political and military and defense fields as well.

Well, once again, Mr. President, I'm happy to come to a friendly country to meet a friend. And we want to work together for world peace. Our region must achieve stability, which is essential for the prosperity of its people. And in our country, thank God we are prosperous, but we want prosperity for the entire region. And we are willing to cooperate with you in order to achieve that.

Thank you, Mr. President, for your hospitality. And I look forward to seeing you in Riyadh and seeing American officials coming to see us in Riyadh and also Saudi officials coming to the United States.

President Obama. Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:39 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. King Salman spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Joint Statement by President Obama and King Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia

September 4, 2015

At the invitation of President Barack Obama, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abd alAziz Al-Saud visited the United States and met with President Obama at the White House on September 4, 2015. The two leaders had a positive and fruitful discussion in which they reviewed the enduring relationship between their countries. The relationship has grown deeper and stronger over the past seven decades in the political, economic, military, security, cultural and other spheres of mutual interest. The two leaders stressed the importance of continuing to bolster their strategic relationship for the benefit of the two governments and peoples. The President noted the Kingdom's leadership role in the Arab and Islamic world.

The two parties affirmed the need to continue efforts to maintain security, prosperity and stability in the region and in particular to counter Iran's destabilizing activities. In this regard, King Salman expressed his support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between Iran and the P5+1 countries, which once fully implemented will prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and thereby enhance security in the region.

The two leaders expressed satisfaction with the outcome of the Camp David Summit among the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and President Obama last May, which aimed at strengthening the U.S.-GCC partnership and fostering closer defense and security cooperation, and both leaders expressed their commitment to implement all the understandings reached at Camp David.

The two leaders noted the on-going military cooperation between the two countries in confronting ISIL/DAESH, in working to protect the sea-lanes and in confronting piracy. They discussed fast-tracking the provision of certain military equipment to the Kingdom, as well as heightened cooperation on counter-terrorism, maritime security, cybersecurity, and ballistic missile defense.

The two leaders underscored the importance of confronting terrorism and violent extremism. They expressed their continued commitment to the security cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the United States, including joint efforts to counter al-Qaeda and ISIL/DAESH. They noted the importance of their cooperation to stem the flow of foreign fighters, to counter ISIL's hateful propaganda, and to cut off terrorist financing streams. Both leaders stressed the need for a long-term, multi-year counterterrorism effort against both al-Qaeda and ISIL, requiring sustained cooperation from partner nations across the globe.

On Yemen, the two parties stressed the urgent need to implement relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, including UNSCR 2216, in order to facilitate a political solution based on the GCC Initiative and the outcomes of the National Dialogue. Both leaders expressed concern for the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. King Salman conveyed Saudi Arabia's commitment to continue to assist the Yemeni people; to work with coalition and international partners to allow for unfettered access to assistance vetted by the UN and its partners, including fuel, to the impacted peo-

ple of Yemen; and, to that end, to work toward opening Red Sea ports to be operated under UN supervision. Both leaders agreed to support and enable the UN-led humanitarian relief efforts.

Regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the two leaders underscored the enduring importance of the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, and underlined the necessity of reaching a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement to the conflict based on two states living side-by-side in peace and security. They also encouraged both parties to take steps to preserve and advance the two-state solution.

Both leaders stressed the importance of reaching a lasting solution to the Syrian conflict based on the principles of Geneva 1 to end the suffering of the Syrian people, maintain continuity of civilian and military government institutions, preserve the unity and territorial integrity of Syria, and ensure the emergence of a peaceful, pluralistic and democratic state free of discrimination or sectarianism. The two leaders reiterated that any meaningful political transition would have to include the departure of Bashar al Asad who has lost legitimacy to lead Syria.

The two sides expressed their support for Prime Minister Abadi's efforts to defeat ISIL/DAESH and encouraged the full implementation of reforms agreed to last summer and those agreed to by Parliament recently. Implementation of these reforms will support security and stability in Iraq and preserve its national unity and territorial integrity, as well as unify the internal front to fight terrorism, which threatens all Iraqis.

The two leaders emphasized their continued strong support for Lebanon and its sovereignty, security and stability, and for the Lebanese Armed Forces as they secure Lebanon and its borders and resist extremist threats. The two leaders also affirmed the critical importance of Lebanon's parliament expeditiously electing a new President in accordance with the Constitution of Lebanon.

The two leaders discussed the challenge of global climate change and agreed to work together to achieve a successful outcome at the Paris negotiations in December.

Finally, the two leaders discussed a new strategic partnership for the 21st century and how to significantly elevate the relationship between the two countries. His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman briefed the President on the Kingdom's views regarding the strategic partnership. The President and King Salman directed officials in their respective governments to explore appropriate ways to move forward in the coming months.

NOTE: The joint statement referred to President Bashar al-Asad of Syria; Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi of Iraq; and Minister of Defense Muhammad bin Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia. It also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

The President's Weekly Address
September 5, 2015

Hi, everybody. I hope most of you are gearing up for a long weekend with family and friends: maybe some barbecues, road trips, or fantasy drafts. But I wanted to take a moment to talk to you about the real meaning of Labor Day, a day we set aside every year to honor the hard-working men and women who fought for so many of the rights that we take for granted today.

The 8-hour workday, 40-hour workweek, weekends. Overtime and the minimum wage. Safer workplaces. Health insurance, Social Security, Medicare, and retirement plans. All of those gains were fought for and won by the labor movement, folks who were working not just for a bigger paycheck for themselves, but for more security and prosperity for the folks working next to them as well. That's how we built the great American middle class.

And that's the spirit we've been working to restore these past 6½ years. On Friday, we

found out that the economy created another 173,000 jobs in August. Over the past 5½ years, our businesses have created 13.1 million new jobs in total, the longest streak of job creation on record. The unemployment rate dropped to 5.1 percent, the lowest it's been in 7 years. The American auto industry is on track to sell more cars and trucks this year than it has in more than a decade. Sixteen million Americans have gained the security of health insurance. Seventeen States and about 30 cities and counties have raised the minimum wage. And we've proposed extending overtime protections to as many as 5 million Americans. All of that is progress.

Now, this month, Congress has an opportunity to continue that progress. As always, the deadline for Congress to pass a budget is the end of September. Every year. This is not new. And if they don't, they'll shut down the Government for the second time in 2 years. At a time when the global economy faces headwinds and America's economy is a relative bright spot in the world, a shutdown of our Government would be wildly irresponsible. It would be an unforced error that saps the momentum we've worked so hard to build. Plain and simple, a shutdown would hurt working Americans.

It doesn't have to happen. If Congress wants to support working Americans and strengthen our middle class, they can pass a budget that invests in, not makes cuts to, the middle class. If they pass a budget with shortsighted sequester cuts that harm our military and our economy, I will veto it. If they make smart investments in our military readiness, our infrastructure, our schools, public health, and research, I'll sign that budget, and they know that.

So let's get it done. Our economy doesn't need another round of threats and brinkmanship. Nobody gets to play games with our economy or the middle class I grew up in and you grew up in. Tell Congress to pass a budget that reflects the values we honor on Labor Day: rewarding hard work, giving everybody a fair shot, and working together to give all of our kids a better life.

Thanks, everybody, and enjoy your weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2:15 p.m. on September 4 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on September 5. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 4, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on September 5.

Remarks at the Greater Boston Labor Council Labor Day Breakfast in Boston, Massachusetts
September 7, 2015

The President. Hello, Boston! Well, everybody, have a seat. Everybody, have a seat. Happy Labor Day, everybody.

Audience members. Thank you. Happy Labor Day to you!

The President. This is a day where we celebrate the grit, the resilience, and the hard work of America's working families. Let me start by thanking your mayor, Mayor Walsh, who has stood up for working folks for a long time, since before he held this office. You've got two outstanding Senators: Elizabeth Warren in the house and Ed Markey. I brought along our Labor Secretary, Tom Perez, who's fighting for you every day. I know we must have some other Members of Congress here—I love them—and labor leaders who have devoted their lives to working Americans. Some of them caught a ride with me on the way over here. Mary Kay Henry from SEIU. Randi Weingarten from AFT. Arturo Rodriguez from UFW. Billy Hite from my hometown of Chicago, from UA. We've got Massachusetts AFL–CIO President, Steve Tolman. And give it up for Rich Rogers and everybody from the Greater Boston Labor Council for hosting this great breakfast.

It's always good to be back in Boston, especially when the weather is like this. [*Laughter*]

But pretty soon fall is going to be in the air. Students coming back. Pats kick off on Thursday. Brady is free. [*Laughter*] And I've got a lot of good memories about this city. As we were driving up past the Commons, I was thinking about when I was a student here. The truth is, I was in the library most of the time, so I didn't get to have as much fun as I should have.

A couple years ago, I stood with you as you showed the world that no tragedy can compete with "Boston Strong." And then, there was that convention that you hosted back in 2004, before I had a motorcade—[*laughter*]—traffic from Logan was a little tougher back then, but you were kind enough to give a warm Boston welcome to an unknown State senator with a funny name.

And it's been 11 years since then. I have added a few gray hairs. I've earned every one of them. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. Woo! So handsome!

The President. Oh, see there—[*laughter*]—I'm sorry, what was that?

Audience members. You're handsome!

The President. There you go. [*Laughter*] See, now I really feel good.

But the words that I spoke that night in 2004 are the same ones that generations of Americans worked for and fought for. That's the belief that America is the most extraordinary of countries: a place only this country, where somebody like me could rise to the heights of political office; a conviction that no matter who you are or what you look like, or how much money you were born into, we can all make something of ourselves. We can clock in at a job that rewards our work with dignity and security. We can give our kids something better if we're willing to work for it, and instill in them the values of hard work and respect for other people, and love of country, and the notion that here in America we're all in it together, that we are the United States of America. We're a Union.

And those are the beliefs that built this country. Those are the beliefs that built the strongest middle class the world has ever seen. But it wasn't just beliefs, it wasn't just words, that built the middle class in this country. You've got to say more than America is great and that's it. You've got to work for it. It's not enough just to say America is exceptional. You've got to prove it. You've got to work to keep it that way. And that's what generations of the labor movement have done. It was hard-working Americans who marched and organized to help working families get ahead. It was hard-working folks who demanded not simply a bigger paycheck for themselves, but more security for the folks working next to them too. They were the ones who were out in the cold on picket lines. They were the folks who were dealing with the Pinkertons. They were the folks who sometimes got beat or got fired for organizing; got threatened and stood up for an idea that everybody deserves a fair shake.

And those folks—your parents, grandparents, great-grandparents—they're the ones who gave us the 40-hour workweek. They're the ones who gave us overtime and the minimum wage and all kinds of things that folks now take for granted. It was those fights that gave us health insurance and Social Security and Medicare and retirement plans. All those gains are union-made. They're stamped with the union label. They're what we celebrate today.

And those values that built the middle class—working people's values, ordinary folks' values—that's what's guided me every day as President. I came in during the worst recession any of us have ever seen. And we've worked to rebuild our economy on a new foundation—to make it stronger for everybody. It's working folks who helped power our economy to 66 straight months of private-sector job growth—the longest streak on record. Five and a half straight years, 13.1 million new jobs overall. The lowest unemployment rate in 7 years.

It was working people, middle class values that restored the meaning of the word "Made in America," "Made in the U.S.A." We had an auto industry that was flat on its back when I came into office. Now we're on track to sell more cars and trucks this year than we have in more than a decade. American manufacturing had been declining for a decade, and then we

came in and we nearly created 900,000 jobs in 5½ years. Fastest manufacturing growth that we've seen in a very long time.

When I came into office, business leaders said the best place to invest was in China. Well, they don't say that no more. [*Laughter*] Now the number-one place to invest is right here in the United States of America. That's because we've got the best workers in the world. That's progress.

Now, we're entering into political season. I'm so glad I'm not on the ballot. [*Laughter*] But it's political season. It starts earlier and earlier, and so now we're starting to hear a lot about middle class values. Everybody wants to talk about the middle class. But some folks seem confused about what exactly that means. So let me provide a refresher course.

For me, for us, middle class values means providing tax cuts to 98 percent of Americans, but then asking the top 2 percent to pay a little bit more. That's helping middle class families. For us, middle class values means protecting Main Street from another crisis with the toughest Wall Street reforms in history that your Senators helped to make happen. It means reforming student loans and increasing Pell Grants so every kid can afford a college education. And we've got to keep working to make 2 years of community college free for everybody who's willing to work for it. It means helping 16 million Americans gain the security of health insurance, because nobody in America should have to live in fear of going broke just because they or somebody in their family got sick. That's what it means to us to have middle class values.

And we know we've got more work to do to make sure more families feel the gains of this recovery. But the fact is that the verdict is in. Middle class economics works. Looking out for working people works. Bottom-up economics works. Middle-class-out economics works. When you make sure everybody gets a fair shot and a fair shake and you're fighting for decent wages for workers and making sure they've got decent benefits, when you reward people who are playing by the rules, that's how everybody does better. That's how America gets ahead. That's how it's always been in this country.

Unfortunately, there are some folks in Washington—and some folks who are trying to get to Washington—who don't want to face these facts. No matter whether we're supporting working families or signing up folks for health care or anything else that we do, we keep on hearing back from them: "Oh, you're going to destroy jobs. You're going to destroy business. You're going to crush freedom. You can't have a minimum wage for people; it's bad for business, bad for jobs. You can't provide people health care; it's going to destroy the economy."

In their world, the only way to help the country grow and help people get ahead is to cut taxes for millionaires and billionaires and loosen up rules on big banks and polluters, and then you just wait, and then you look up at the sky, and prosperity will come raining down on us—[*laughter*]—from the top of the whatever high rise is in your city. But that's not how the economy works. That's not how working people get ahead. And that mindset, that ideology is what's been shrinking wages and increasing inequality and wrecking the economy for a long, long time. And we're fighting to reverse it. But these folks are pretty stubborn. I will give them credit; they don't let facts or evidence get in the way. [*Laughter*] They really don't.

And as I said, that—they're—Republicans in Washington are trying to rebrand themselves as the party of the middle class. I'm glad they're doing it, really. I mean, I want them to start rethinking their positions on issues. I'd love to work with them on stuff. But you can't just talk the talk, you've got to walk the walk. You can't talk middle class and then do things that hurt the middle class. You can't say you care about working people and then do things that hurt working people.

I'll give you an example. Right now Republicans in Washington have the chance to prove they really care about working families. Congress has to pass a budget by the end of this month, or they risk shutting down the Government for the second time in 2 years. Now, ev-

erybody knows the world economy is pretty volatile right now. Our economy is a relative bright spot. We're doing better than just about everybody else. So a shutdown would be completely irresponsible. It would be an unforced error, a fumble on the goal line. It would be like a ground ball slipping through somebody's legs. [*Laughter*] You guys have won a couple since that time, so I can make that joke. If you hadn't had so many World Series wins, I wouldn't make that joke.

Point is, it doesn't have to happen. Congress can pass a budget that does away with this so-called sequester that just lops things off whether it's good or not for the economy, harms our military, hurts working people. We could instead invest in working families, invest in our military readiness, invest in our schools, rebuild our roads, rebuild our ports, rebuild our airports, put people back to work right now. I'll sign that budget. I'm ready to work with them.

But so far at least, instead of hearing about how we can all move together, what we're hearing from those folks is threats that they might shut down the Government over things that don't even have to do with the budget. Try to stop the budget in order to force us to do something that would restrict women's health care, for example. That's not a good idea. And you're seeing all kinds of mindless proposals that would harm our military readiness and cut job training, cut Head Start, cut preschools, cut K-through-12 education.

They're still talking about repealing Obamacare. I mean, they've taken 56 votes to repeal this thing. Everybody says it's working. It's working better than even I expected—[*laughter*]—and costing less. And they're still talking about repealing. And what we're seeing from them is this constant war against unions, a constant attack on working Americans, by weakening worker protections, undermining workplace safety, gutting your ability to save for retirement, preventing you from forming a union.

I mean, this is a party that says it wants to rebrand itself. I'm going to quote them here. They said they want to be "the party of the American worker and the party of higher wages." Well, that's great. But think about it. They oppose raising the minimum wage. They're doing everything they can to bust unions. And then, they want to claim to be the party of the American worker. I—take a look at some of the folks who want to be their standard bearer in the next election. I won't quote—I won't say their names, but you can kind of attach the quote to their names. So one candidate, he is bragging about how he destroyed collective bargaining rights in his State.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And says that busting unions prepares him to fight ISIL. [*Laughter*] I didn't make that up. That's what he said. Really? A whole bunch of them are hoping to make "right to work" the law of the land. They think that's the answer to economic prosperity. You had one who blamed unions for the women's pay gap. Think about that. So what if there were no unions, then suddenly, women are all going to be paid equal? These are the same folks who fought against equal pay legislation in Congress.

And then there was the guy—these guys are running for office; they're running for the Presidency—who said a union deserves a punch in the face. [*Laughter*] Really? Tell me how you really feel. It reminds me of something our old friend Ted Kennedy used to say: "What is it about working men and women that [they] find so offensive?" Why are they so mad about folks just trying to make a living, keep a roof over their heads, and go to work every day, look after their families, rebuild their community? Why are you mad about that? These are the folks who built America. These are the folks that allowed businesses to prosper. Why are you attacking ordinary people who are just out there trying to do their jobs?

I've said it before. I'll say it again: If I were looking for a good job that lets me build some security for my family, I'd join a union. If I wanted somebody who had my back, I'd join a union. I've—I travel a lot, I've been to countries that don't have unions, that prohibit unions. That's where you've got, still, child labor. That's where you have terrible exploitation, and workers are constantly being injured

and hurt, and there are no protections. And no—and that's true for everybody because there's no union movement. Even Brady is happy he's got a union. [*Laughter*] They had his back. So you know if Brady needs a union, we definitely need unions. [*Laughter*] So—because the fact of the matter is, even kids understand this: You're stronger when you stand together.

And job—and a job is about more than a paycheck. Employees are more than just cogs in a wheel. They're moms and dads with dreams for their kids. They're folks who pick up the extra shift to help out another worker who's in a jam. They're folks who are trying to save for retirement after years of sacrifice. Folks who clock in every morning and stay late to make sure the job is done right and then donate some of that hard-earned money to their church or their YMCA. There's a pride and there's a dignity inherent in any job, whether you've got the security of a union or not. But a union will help express that dignity and that sense of voice in what you do every single day.

And I believe that all workplaces should reflect the worth and the dignity of our working families. And that's why we fought for worker safety. That's why we fight for the right to organize. That's why we're hosting a White House Summit on Worker Voice next month—to make sure that working Americans share in the blessings of this country—and why people who aren't in unions right now need to understand why unions are so important. It's why last summer we hosted a Working Families Summit to talk about issues like higher pay and fairer pay and childcare and workplace flexibility and paid leave. These things aren't just good for working women and working families, they're good for business too. They're good for the economy as a whole.

Now, the good news is, for the past couple of years, working in concert with great Members of Congress like Ed and Elizabeth, we've taken steps to address some issues facing working families. And we've had the cooperation of Governors and mayors in a lot of places. Seventeen States, about 30 cities, have answered the call to raise the minimum wage. I raised wages for Federal contractors. In June, we proposed action to protect a worker's right to overtime, extending protections to as many as 5 million Americans who weren't getting a fair shake when it came to overtime rules. It's a pretty straightforward proposition: If you're working harder and longer, you should get paid for it.

I believe that you should be able to talk openly about how much you get paid to make sure everybody is getting paid the same. That's how we know if there's unfairness in the workplace. That's something Lilly Ledbetter had to deal with and helped contribute to the pay gap. So, last spring, I acted to combat pay secrecy. Working with Tom Perez, we are finalizing a rule this week that makes sure that what people are getting paid is out there so you know if you're getting cheated. If you find out you're getting shortchanged, you shouldn't live in fear of getting fired because you raise your voice. You should be able to press your claim.

And I believe that working Americans should have the basic security of paid leave. Right now we are the only advanced nation on Earth that does not guarantee paid maternity leave. Think about that. You had one study found that nearly one in four working moms return to work within 2 weeks of childbirth. Think about that. Now, for the men in the audience in particular, think about that. We wouldn't even go to work if we had to carry around somebody for 9 months. The human race would evaporate. We couldn't even take it. [*Laughter*] And then, the notion that after you had that baby, you had to go back to work 2 weeks later.

Only 12 percent of our private sector workers have access to paid family leave. We've got millions of people who can't care for a loved one with a serious illness without losing a paycheck or risking their job. And there's a good proposal out there—the FAMILY Act—that would deal with some of these issues. I'm calling on Congress: Take a cue from the rest of the world, work together in a bipartisan fashion, find a way to make paid leave—paid family and medical leave—a reality for all Americans. That's something we should be doing. It's past

time to do it. It will be good for business, not bad for business.

And while we're at it, pass a national policy for paid sick days as well. Right now about 40 percent of private-sector workers—44 million people in America—don't have access to paid sick leave. You've got parents who have to choose between losing income or staying home with their sick child. You have victims of domestic violence or sexual assault who can't seek medical attention or counseling because they might have their pay docked. Let's face it, nobody wants a waiter who feels like they have to come to work when they're coughing or contagious. But if they don't have sick leave, what are they going to do? They've got to pay the rent. That's not good for anybody.

Now, unfortunately, only Congress has the power to give this security to all Americans. But where I can act, I will. And by the way, I just did. As we were flying over here, I signed a new Executive order requiring Federal contractors to allow employees who work on our contracts to earn up to 7 paid sick days a year. This will give about 300,000 working Americans access to paid sick leave for the first time.

And it builds on the growing momentum of people who are answering the call on paid leave across the country. Right now you've got dozens of cities—Pittsburgh, Philly, Atlanta—who have adopted paid sick leave or paid family leave policies. You've got companies like Hilton; and Johnson and Johnson; and others that are expanding paid leave. Microsoft, Facebook requiring it from their contractors and vendors. And we've seen that many companies, including small businesses, support these policies because they understand it helps with recruitment and retention. It helps you keep good employees. One study in Connecticut shows that three-quarters of companies are on board with their State's paid sick leave law.

And here in Massachusetts, you're already ahead of the game. Last fall, folks easily approved paid sick leave throughout the Commonwealth. In May, Mayor Walsh signed an ordinance allowing for up to 6 weeks of paid parental leave for city employees. You all should be proud of what you're doing for working families in this State.

But that's not a new story here in Massachusetts. You all have always been a little ahead of the curve. Almost two centuries ago, there were the "Mill Girls" up in Lowell, the Nation's first union of working women. Folks in Boston helped lead the way to an 8-hour workday. Generation by generation, from the textile and trolley workers to the hotel and parking workers of today, hard-working men and women like all of you in this Commonwealth have stood up for working families.

And what's been true in Massachusetts has been true all across the country. You understand that we're stronger together than when we're apart. When we are together, we carry each other up to heights we can't reach on our own. And that's what we honor every day on Labor Day. And whenever I'm with you, I'm optimistic about America, because while I know that it's not going to happen in 1 day or 1 month, won't even be completed under two terms of one President, I know working together we're going to build a better future for ourselves and our kids, and for working families all across the country. I have seen it. You have seen it. And now we've just got to keep working to make it a reality for every single working person in America.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless this country we love. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 a.m. at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel and Towers. In his remarks, he referred to Thomas E.P. Brady, Jr., quarterback, National Football League's New England Patriots; Gov. Scott K. Walker of Wisconsin, former Hewlett-Packard Chief Executive Officer Cara Carleton "Carly" Fiorina, and Gov. Christopher J. Christie of New Jersey, in their capacities as 2016 Republican Presidential candidates; and Lilly Ledbetter, former employee, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. plant in Gadsden, AL. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization; and Executive Order 13706, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Honoring the NCAA Men's Basketball Champion Duke University Blue Devils

September 8, 2015

The President. Welcome to the White House, everybody. Hope you all had a good Labor Day. Let's give it up for the National Champion Duke Blue Devils! We thought about inviting the Cameron Crazies here, but I didn't want any blue paint smudging my walls, so—[*laughter*]—we weren't sure if the risers could take it if they were jumping up and down. So you'll just have to shout and scream from your seats.

We've got some big Duke fans here today, including some Members of Congress, our Transportation Secretary, a native of North Carolina, Anthony Foxx. I'd like to recognize the chairman of Duke's Board of Trustees, David Rubenstein, who's here. Duke President Richard Brodhead is here. Athletic Director Kevin White is here. And an up-and-coming coach named Mike Krzyzewski. [*Applause*] Hey!

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. [*Laughter*] We think he has a lot of potential. [*Laughter*] Although, he does look the same. Have you noticed? There's like that Dorian Gray mirror thing going on somewhere.

True to Coach K's Army roots, we've also got Secretary of the Army, John McHugh is here. Where's John? Right here. And our new Chief of Staff of the Army, General Mark Milley, is here as well.

So it's good to see the Blue Devils again. This is the second time that I've hosted them here at the White House. It is. [*Applause*] And my old body man, Reggie Love, played for Coach K, helped me win a lot of pickup games. [*Laughter*] And then there's Derek Rhodes. Where's Derek? Derek was an intern here last summer before being head manager for the championship run. So a little White House magic rubbed off on this team. I'm just saying.

And I can relate to this program. Does well in the classroom. Won twice in the past 4 years. [*Laughter*] Know what it's like for people to oppose you no matter what you try to do. [*Laughter*] I mean, when I flip on ESPN and I see a documentary about how people still "hate" Christian Laettner—[*laughter*]—a guy who played for Duke 23 years ago, I realize, well, maybe I don't have it so bad. Or I think this is going to be a long 23 years. [*Laughter*]

But here's the thing. If folks didn't like this year's Blue Devils, they were just being haters because—or they lived in Chapel Hill. That's a possibility as well. Because these guys were fun. They ran off 14 straight wins to start the season. But by tournament time, they were down to just eight scholarship players: four freshmen and one senior.

They had a soft-spoken All-American in the middle, Jahlil Okafor—from the Chicago area, I might just add—[*laughter*]—whose size and footwork bent defenses in a way that people hadn't seen in a very long time. There was the Final Four's Most Outstanding Player, Tyus Jones—or "Tyus Stones"—because of all the shots he made. [*Laughter*] There was freshmen Justise Winslow flying all over the place—[*laughter*]—dominating some of the games in the tournament. Senior Quinn Cook provided senior leadership, setting a school alltime assist-to-turnover record. And then, there was Grayson Allen, who just went crazy—[*laughter*]—who clearly didn't know any better and just said, well, I'm going to score eight straight points at the end of a game.

And in that championship game against Wisconsin, the four freshmen scored every point in the second half. The Blue Devils shut down the most efficient offense in the country when they needed to. And that lockdown defense—which, let's face it, had not been evident in every game during the season—[*laughter*]—was the key to Duke's fifth title run.

And Coach K described this year's championship as "the best moment of his coaching career." And with five career championships, second to only the legendary John Wooden, that's saying something. Last season, Coach K became the first Division I men's college coach to win

1,000 games. And somehow he did it without ever saying a bad word to a referee. [*Laughter*]

Head Coach Michael W. Krzyzewski. That's true. That's true. Only what they deserved. [*Laughter*]

The President. Only what they deserved, he said. [*Laughter*] That's what I say about some of my opponents. [*Laughter*]

But everybody knows this program is not just about winning on the hardwood. Five players made the all-conference academic squad this year: Tyus, Justise, Grayson, Amile Jefferson, and Marshall Plumlee. That is worth applause. Marshall also spent much of this summer in leadership training at Fort Knox as he works to become a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army. So—[*applause*]. I was saying to Marshall, though, I feel bad for his parents trying to pay those grocery bills. When you've got, like, three folks 7 feet, you know they're eating a lot. [*Laughter*] That's a big grocery bill.

This team also visited Durham elementary schools for the "Read With the Blue Devils" campaign. Coach K authored an op-ed on the importance of early childhood education. Players volunteered as mentors at the Emily Krzyzewski Center, which is named for the Coach's mother and aims to break the cycle of poverty through out-of-school programs that help young people reach college.

So this is the kind of program that we hope for at any institution of higher learning. They represent their university well on and off the court. And that's why their fans are so passionate. That's why sometimes there are going to be some haters. [*Laughter*] But they deserve every accolade. They've got a great leader in Coach K, and it's an outstanding university, an outstanding program, and they deserve our hearty congratulations. Very proud of you guys.

Thank you. Good. Coach.

Coach Krzyzewski. Thank you. Mr. President, thanks for opening up your home. [*Laughter*] We've been to your house twice, and you've never been to our house. [*Laughter*]

The President. We'll have to correct that.

Coach Krzyzewski. We have to correct that in about a little over a year.

The President. A little over a year.

Coach Krzyzewski. And we hope to do that. By the way, the guys already ultimately respect you, but seeing you perform here, once your term is over, "Saturday Night Live" should have a permanent host, I think. [*Laughter*]

The President. Comedian in Chief, I could do a good job.

Coach Krzyzewski. It would be great. The cool thing about our group was that they were fun. And even the energy that—when I walk into a room, I always—like, is it a locker room that needs to be picked up? Or are you already picked up? And you guys are already up. [*Laughter*]

And—but that's what these guys did for me and my staff the entire year. And I just want to tell them publicly that we love them, and it was amazing. And thanks for sharing that year with me. And the guys coming back, if you could do that again, I wouldn't mind. [*Laughter*]

We have loved being here. Last night, David Rubenstein made it available for us to have a dinner at the National Archives, so it was an unbelievable night. And in front of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Declaration of Independence, our guys were awarded their championship rings last night.

The President. That's great.

Coach Krzyzewski. So that was a cool night. They're pretty big, by the way.

The President. They are. [*Laughter*] Show it again.

Coach Krzyzewski. I'm from Chicago. A little bit of bling is not—[*laughter*]—it's not bad.

But the last 24 hours to be in front of—in that great building, in front of those documents and realizing the great men that started this country, but also then to come here and be in your house. And on behalf of our Duke community, we want to thank you for serving our country over these last two terms. You've been an amazing leader for our country. And it's not just you, but your family and the sacrifices. So thank you very much for your service. [*Applause*]

The President. Thank you.

Coach Krzyzewski. When we visit—and you won't have to do this when you visit our house—but usually, when you visit someone's house, you bring a gift. So we brought a few gifts. And I want to explain them and then

going to have Amile and Quinn, our cocaptains, give them. But we have a jersey.

The President. I need a jersey.

Coach Krzyzewski. We have a ball, all right.

The President. You've got a ball. I need a ball.

Coach Krzyzewski. And we have—I know you——

The President. My bracket again? [*Laughter*]

Coach Krzyzewski. No, no. We—[*laughter*].

The President. He did this to me last time.

Coach Krzyzewski. No, no. But any time you take a test and you put your answers there, you should always want the approved solution. [*Laughter*] So that——

The President. This is the second time. [*Laughter*]

Coach Krzyzewski. But the other thing is not material, it's—I know you can't do it while you're President. But after you're through, we would like to scholarship you to our fantasy camp. [*Laughter*] We run a fantasy camp.

The President. Oh, excellent. Yes. [*Laughter*]

Coach Krzyzewski. Reggie said you can play and little—pound the ball a little bit, is what he said.

The President. Let's do it. [*Laughter*]

Coach Krzyzewski. But for 35—but for guys 35 and older.

The President. Yes. I'll dominate. [*Laughter*]

Coach Krzyzewski. He's not unlike the other 80 guys who come—[*laughter*]—and then, they find out the truth. [*Laughter*] But anyway, you have a scholarship.

The President. Thank you. I'm honored. Thank you.

Coach Krzyzewski. Yes. But again, thank you for inviting us for this very, very special day. And if Quinn and Amile—will you guys come down? If you guys would come in and present that. You can leave the bracket. That was a joke.

[*At this point, guard Quinn Cook and forward Amile Jefferson presented the gifts to the President.*]

The President. Thank you so much. Fantastic. Thank you. Let's strike the podium, and we'll get good pictures in. Come on, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:56 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Personal Aide to the President Reginald L. Love; Tyus Jones and Grayson Allen, guards, Justise Winslow, forward, and Marshall Plumlee, center, Duke University men's basketball team; and Perky and Leslie Plumlee, parents, and Miles and Mason Plumlee, brothers, of Mr. Plumlee.

Remarks at Macomb Community College in Warren, Michigan
September 9, 2015

The President. All right. Hello, Michigan! Oh, it's good to be back at Macomb. Go Monarchs!

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back. I do. Yeah!

I want to begin by thanking your president, Jim Jacobs, for hosting us. We have got also two outstanding Members of Congress here who support every single initiative that we've got here in the State of Michigan. We've got Sandy Levin and Brenda Lawrence. We've got your mayor, James Fouts, here. [*Applause*] Well, somebody was really excited about you, James. [*Laughter*] And of course, we've got my favorite community college professor, Dr. Jill Biden, here. Jill was not fibbing; on Air Force One, she was grading papers. [*Laughter*] She was. And I was—I had flashbacks to when I was teaching law and grading papers. It's not as bad as writing papers—[*laughter*]—but reading them is tough too, sometimes.

Jill works with Michelle to support our military families. She's leading the new College Promise Advisory Board. On top of that, she teaches full time at a community college in Virginia. And her husband is not so bad either. [*Laughter*] He's okay. Love Joe Biden.

The—so, across our country, young people—and some just young-at-heart people—[*laughter*].

Audience member. All right, all right.

The President. You're young, you're young—are going back to school. Just yesterday Malia started her first day of senior year. You know, I was sitting in her room because I was going to see her off her first day of school. She puts her head on my shoulder, and she says, "Daddy, you know, you realize this is probably going to be the last time that you ever send me off for my first day of school."

Audience members. Aww.

The President. And I started—I had to look away. You know? I didn't want to just be such a crybaby. [*Laughter*] It makes no sense. Michelle and I are way too young to have daughters both—who are both almost in college now. And so, as a parent, I was a little freaked out.

But as President, this time of year does inspire me, because students like the ones here are not just making the best investment in your future, but you're also making the best possible investment in the country's future. If you put in the hard work to earn your education, then it's up to all of us to make sure that hard work pays off. And that's something that I'm going to be focusing on over the next couple of weeks.

You see, education has always been the secret sauce, the secret to America's success. More than 150 years ago, Abraham Lincoln helped establish land-grant colleges all across America. About a hundred years ago, we started moving from an agrarian economy, a farm economy, to an industrial economy. And we became the first country in the world to say that every child deserves a shot at a high school education, even if they weren't born rich. And it's because we were ahead of the curve that we ended up having the most educated workforce. And that was good for the entire economy and good for businesses.

After World War II, we gave returning heroes like my grandfather the chance to go to college on the GI bill. And in those postwar years, the investments that we made in our future made us the best educated nation on Earth. That's one of the reasons we built the world's largest economy. That's the reason we built the biggest, strongest middle class. And in places like Macomb County, you could feel secure, knowing that if you worked hard, you'd have a chance to find a good job, buy a home, raise a family, send your kids to college. We didn't promise everybody that they'd get rich, but we promised that everybody who worked hard would have a chance to get ahead and have the dignity of a decent-paying job with decent-paying benefits. That's what it meant to be middle class.

Now, in more recent decades, the economy has begun to change again. And other countries have caught up. Good jobs, in some cases, went overseas. And rather than redouble our efforts to make ourselves once again at the cutting edge and educate more and more of our young people, we decided to cut taxes for the very top. We stopped investing as much as we needed to in higher education. Tuition started going up because State legislators were providing less support. Folks who were already doing extraordinarily well, they did even better, but prosperity didn't trickle down to the middle class, which was working harder than ever. And then, finally, in 2008, a crisis spread all the way from Wall Street out to Main Street that cost millions of Americans their jobs, their homes, their savings—everything that they had worked so hard to build all their lives.

So we, together, have spent the last 7 years fighting back, getting focused on middle class economics once again. Today, our businesses have created more than 13 million new jobs over the last 5½ years. This is the longest streak of job creation on record: 66 straight months of job creation. So the unemployment rate is now at 5.1 percent, which is the lowest it's been since April of 2008. Another 16 million Americans have the security of health insurance. Our high school dropout rate is at an alltime low. More Americans are graduating college than ever before.

And something that's relevant to this area, because we refused to walk away from the American auto industry, our autoworkers, our automakers are on track to sell more cars and trucks this year than we have done in more than a decade. Workers right here in Michigan who thought they might never build a car again, they can't build them fast enough now.

Chrysler has added more than a thousand jobs at the truck plant right down the road. In May, GM announced plans to invest $1 billion at its Warren Tech Center, adding 2,600 new jobs.

So we placed our bets on American businesses and American workers, and that bet is paying off. Michigan is coming back. America is coming back. Detroit is coming back too. I mean, I don't know how the Lions are going to be this year, but I'm talking about the economy——

Audience member. Super Bowl!

Audience member. Bears!

The President. Okay. Yes. The Bears too, yes. [*Laughter*] Oh, uh-oh. Watch it now. I've got Secret Service. [*Laughter*]

But look, it's not enough to get back to where we were. It's good that we've recovered, but for the sake of future generations, we've got to do better than that. The biggest problem we have right now in today's economy is that although we're creating jobs, the unemployment rate is down, inequality is still creeping up. A lot of times the jobs aren't paying enough. Wages are still flat.

Audience member. I know.

The President. I know. [*Laughter*] Now, some of that has to do with the fact that companies that are making record profits just aren't sharing enough of those profits with their workers. And that's a problem. And in some cases, our tax policies continue to incentivize jobs moving overseas.

But a big part of making sure that today's economy works better for ordinary folks goes back to what I started with: this issue of education. Every American willing to work hard should have a shot at a higher education. Because as the economy globally becomes more competitive, everybody has got to upgrade their skills just a little bit. Right? It's not enough just to have the same skills for 30 years, because what worked 30 years ago isn't going to work now and what works now is not going to work 5 years from now or 10 years from now, because everything is moving too fast. And if you don't have the skills to get the new jobs that pay better, if you don't have the knowledge to adapt and be creative with new machinery, new systems, new techniques, you're going to fall behind. And then, the wages for unskilled work will go down, and you'll be trapped.

Compared to those with a high school diploma, college graduates earn about $1 million more over the course of their lifetimes. That's a lot of money, a million dollars. Even today. If you have a degree from a 2-year college, you earn $10,000 a year more than somebody who only finished high school. So one study found that over their lifetimes, workers who complete an on-the-job apprenticeship earn around $300,000 more than their peers who didn't go through an apprenticeship program. So whether it's through a community college, an apprenticeship program, upgrading your skills pays off. The unemployment rate for those folks are lower, and they're going to earn more money over their lifetimes.

By the end of the decade, two in three job openings will require some form of postsecondary education, some form of higher education. Now, you don't have to necessarily to go to a 4-year college to get a good job, but you have to have some sort of specialized skill in order for you to advance. It's not enough just to be strong and willing to work. It used to be you walked into an auto plant, and you said, look, I'm going to get to work on time. I don't mind getting dirty. I'm willing to work hard. And that was enough. It helped, by the way, that there were strong unions. And that's a whole—I talked about that during Labor Day, by the way.

Part of what gives workers more leverage to get higher pay when the company is making a lot of money is, is that they've got a union behind them.

But whether it is a bachelor's degree, an associate's degree, a journeyman's card from an apprenticeship program, having a credential above and beyond your high school diploma, that's the surest ticket to the middle class. And in global competition for jobs and industries, having the best educated workforce in the world is the surest way for America to stay on top.

So that's why I believe no kid should be priced out of a college education. No hard-working young person should be denied a shot at success just because of where they started out in life. Because you don't know—that's the thing about America, where you start off doesn't determine where you're going to end up. I was the child of a single mom. And we weren't rich, and I turned out okay. But the reason is, I got an education. Same thing with Michelle, same thing with Jill Biden, same thing with a lot of you.

And that's why, since I took office, we've increased Pell grants for low-income students by 70 percent. We've helped over 2 million more young people afford college. We created a new college opportunity tax credit for working families, averaging about $1,800 a year. With our new GI bill for our veterans, our heroes coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan, we've helped more than 700,000 veterans and their family members earn a college education.

We took on a student loan system that was letting big banks be the middlemen on student loans. And so they were taking $10 billion—tens of billions of dollars in unnecessary subsidies; we said we'll cut out the middlemen, give the money directly to our students, the folks who need it.

And back in 2009, when I had no gray hair—[*laughter*]—I had a little bit, but you couldn't see it. [*Laughter*] And now you can see it. I still look good though?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Thank you. I was fishing for that compliment. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. Better now.

The President. Better? Okay. [*Laughter*] Where was I? [*Laughter*] I got all flushed. I was blushing a little bit.

Back in 2009, I came here, and I announced my plan to invest in community colleges like this one. And sometimes, it can feel like 4-year colleges get all the attention, but that has to change. And I've tried to make sure that it changes. I have been focused on community colleges. They're at the heart of the American Dream. Community colleges are everywhere. They're accessible. They're a gateway for folks who—maybe their parents didn't go to college, maybe they can't afford a 4-year college, maybe they—the career path they want to follow isn't the traditional one.

This becomes the kind of place where you can earn the skills you need to start a great career right away. It's the kind of place where you don't have to choose between pursuing an education and supporting a family; you can do both because it's flexible. It gives folks who have to start working right away the chance to also get a skill or a degree.

It's the kind of place where young people can save money before they start a 4-year school—they can transfer their credits—a place where older workers can retool and retrain, take their careers to the next level.

Over the last 7 years, America has been graduating more students from community colleges than ever before. But I'm not satisfied. We can go further. So, in my State of the Union Address, I announced my plan to bring down the cost of community college to zero. Zero.

For every young person willing to work hard, I want 2 years of college to be as free and universal as high school is today. I mean, back in the day, there were kids who got high school educations if they had a lot of money. But the point was, we realized, no, we want to make everybody educated. That will be good for all of us. And that's what we did. Well, I want to do the same thing now for community college educations.

It's easy for politicians to say that all of you are the future. You know? Every speech, right, is all you guys are the future. But it's not good enough just to say it. You've got to walk the walk, not just talk the talk.

So this is a concrete way—a concrete way—to reduce the costs of higher education for young people, to improve the skills of workers so they get higher paying jobs, to grow our economy. It shouldn't be controversial.

And I want to work with folks back in Washington, both Democrats and Republicans, to pass a responsible budget that invests in you. If students and workers and businesses live up to

their responsibilities, we should be able to make it easier for you to succeed.

And by the way, in my original budget what I said was, it does cost some money to make 2 years of community college free. I said, well, the Federal Government will help States and counties and local communities, and we'll pay for it by closing up some of these corporate tax loopholes that don't help grow the economy and aren't fair anyway.

Now, unfortunately, so far at least, I've gotten a little resistance from Members of Congress. That will shock you. [*Laughter*] But at a time when we should be growing our investments in job training and apprenticeships, we've got Republicans in Congress who are going in the opposite direction. Some are even talking about shutting down the Government at the end of the month. That's what would happen if Congress fails to pass a budget. It would be wildly irresponsible. I mean, right now our economy is actually a bright spot in a pretty volatile world economy. After all the hard work American—the American people have done to get us back on our feet, to recover from that great recession, now is not the time to play games. You'd pull the rug right from under the economy. But there's a lot of talk about that in Washington for unrelated reasons that, by the way, don't even have to do with the budget. They have to do with politics and Presidential elections and posturing and all that good stuff.

Here's the good news. Investing in community colleges should be a cause that can get bipartisan support, because both parties have supported it in the past. Outside of Washington, away from Congress, people are stepping up.

So this fall, Tennessee is enrolling 15,000 students in its community college program. Not one of them had to take out a loan to pay for tuition. Just in the last 6 months, 6 more States and communities have created new programs to provide free community college, including one in Milwaukee just announced today. More than 10 others have introduced new legislation to get this done. So there's a movement going on here. It's an idea whose time has come: Free community college for responsible students. It's an idea that makes sense.

Now, to help more States adopt that idea, as Jill mentioned, we're announcing a new, independent College Promise Advisory Board. It's going to be led by two outstanding leaders: Dr. Jill Biden and former Republican Governor Jim Geringer. And they're going to work with businesses and charities and colleges and labor groups and nonprofits to make sure every young person who works hard has a shot at a great education.

And if you want more information—because we're going to need grassroots support for this idea—we want you to go to the website, headsupamerica.us—headsupamerica.us. And we call it Heads Up America because we're giving folks a heads-up. If you want a great shot at a good-paying job, then community college might be the right path for you. And if you work hard, then community college should be free.

Of course, we don't just want every student to be able to attend community college, we want them to attend a great community college. And that's the other reason I came back to Macomb. All right?

This is one of the best, most innovative community colleges in the country. Under your president's leadership, you work directly with local employers and labor unions to make sure students are getting the skills that they need to get a job right now. You help students find support for their housing and childcare so that it's easier to stay in school. Your early childhood—or early college programs gives high school students the chance to take college courses and earn credits towards a degree.

Whenever you can, you help students get out of the classroom and get hands-on training for jobs that need to be filled right now. You're learning tech skills, advanced manufacturing skills. And instead of taking on more debt for this training, a lot of you are already drawing a paycheck. That's the kind of education you want.

So we want to give workers across America the same chance that you have to get real-world experience that leads directly to a good job. The average starting wage for a worker

who's finished an apprenticeship is now more than $50,000 a year. And by the way, our competitors understand how important these programs are to their economies. On a per capita basis, England has 15 times as many apprentices as we do. Germany has 16 times as many. So that's giving them a leg up when it comes to filling jobs of the future.

Now, if England and Germany can do it—[*laughter*]—I mean, listen, I love the English and the Germans. I'm just saying, this isn't that hard. It's not rocket science. It requires some political will. So today we're taking action to change that.

My administration has already made the largest investment in apprenticeships in nearly a decade. We're going to build on that momentum with $175 million in grants to 46 apprenticeship programs all across the country. And here at Macomb, together with Grand Rapids Community College, Macomb is going to work with partners across the region to give you more opportunities to "earn as you learn." Just down the road, Focus: HOPE is going to help folks living in Detroit earn new jobs or get better paying jobs.

Across America, companies like Northrup Grumman and Rolls Royce will help prepare workers for jobs in advanced manufacturing. You've got companies like Cisco that are helping them to prepare for jobs in IT. Companies like Pfizer will help prepare them for jobs in health care. Unions like the UAW and the AFL–CIO are going to help workers earn new jobs or better paying ones.

So this thing is something everybody can get behind. When our businesses are creating good jobs and our community colleges and training programs are helping workers get the skills they need to fill those jobs, you can't stop us. There's nothing we can't accomplish.

You know, just over 30 years ago, as part of his reelection campaign, President Ronald Reagan came right here to Macomb Community College. Here's what he told young people in the field house that day. "Our duty," he said, "is to make sure that you have the same America of opportunity and hope and dreams and future that we had when we were your age." Now, Ronald Reagan and I belonged to two different parties. We had a different vision about how our economy could grow. But I agree with those words. In America, it should not matter who you are, where you come from, what your last name is, who you love. Everybody deserves a chance to make it. Everybody deserves "opportunity and hope and dreams and future."

And today, with a record streak of job growth and an auto industry that's back on its feet and wages that are starting to finally rise a little bit, I've never been more optimistic about America. We are not there yet. We've got more work to do. But if we just keep on building on the progress that we've already made, if we keep restoring the link between hard work and success, then we won't just recover from that recession that we had, we're not just going to retrain a workforce, we're going to renew our Nation's promise. We're going to rebuild our middle class. We'll remind the world why it is that America is the greatest country on Earth.

Thank you, Michigan. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 3:50 p.m. in the Sports and Expo Center. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. James E. Geringer of Wyoming. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the introductory remarks of Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden.

Remarks at a Roundtable Discussion With Veterans and Gold Star Mothers on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action To Prevent Iran From Obtaining a Nuclear Weapon

September 10, 2015

Well, I am joined today not only by Secretary John Kerry, but by an incredible group of veterans who have served our Nation proudly in different services, different ranks, from infantrymen to some of our top generals, who served in Iraq, who served in Afghanistan. And we also have two Gold Star mothers here whose sons gave everything, that last full measure of devotion, on behalf of American security. I want to begin by thanking all of them for their extraordinary service and sacrifices.

These veterans have come together in their defense of our national security. They believe in maintaining the strongest military the world has ever known. They are proud of our military capabilities and recognize that there are times when it is necessary that we take military action and go to war. What they also understand is that American power relies as well on strong and principled diplomacy.

And that's why, working together, they have been active and instrumental in promoting the need for us to implement this Iran deal. They do so not because they trust Iran; they do so not because they fail to recognize the real dangers that Iran in the past has posed and continues to pose to regional stability; but they do so because they understand that our ability to solve a massive national security problem and prevent Iran from getting nuclear weapons without resort to war is a historic achievement and has to be pursued.

And I just had a chance to thank them for their efforts because I'm absolutely convinced that their willingness and ability to tell their stories to Members of Congress, to describe the losses they've experienced of Army buddies or families members, to be able to describe what they've seen as the costs of war has allowed, I think, a lot of Members who may be feeling political pressure from different directions to remember what a sober and important decision this has been, and it's allowed—created the space for us to be able to make an argument on the merits as to why this deal is right for the American people and our allies and the safety and security of the world.

There are times where, in a debate like this, we hear a lot of loose talk, casual threats of military force, false promises that military actions will be easy or simple or relatively costless. These veterans and their families remind us that that is not the case. They know the consequences when we rush into war. They understand what it means when we act without broad international support and when we fail to consider unintended consequences.

And I want to repeat: None of them are under any illusions. They understand that this is a dangerous world. And it is precisely for that reason that they want to make sure Iran doesn't get a nuclear weapon. And what I indicated to them is that even as this debate winds down, I am hopeful that their voices continue to be heard on a wide range of foreign policy debates. Because we live in a complicated world and we live in a world where terrible things happen, and American leadership is going to be vital in addressing those issues.

But the one principle that I want us to remember every time we make a decision is that American power is not restricted just to our military actions, that we have a lot of tools in the toolkit, and that we have to try to solve problems without resort to military force, understanding that at the end of the day, there may be times where we have to act militarily, but we don't do so as a first resort, and we certainly don't do so on the basis of political considerations. Because the sacrifices are too significant, and the stakes are too high. And I think these veterans and Gold Star family members, they can remind us of that each and every day.

I will continue over the next 14 months to have to make some tough decisions, in concert with Secretary Kerry and Secretary Carter and the rest of my national security team. I

guarantee, the next President is going to continue to be confronted with difficult decisions. And as we lead into this next political season, I just hope that everybody is listening to the veterans around this room and the organizations that they represent, because I think the American people will be well served if they're hearing from the perspective of those who actually fight and the moms who will be visiting Arlington to remember and be with their children. That kind of sobriety in our foreign policy decisionmaking, I think, is necessary and useful.

And so, to all of you, I want to thank you very much for everything you've done. All right?

Thank you, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:45 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sumpter, OR, resident Michelle DeFord; Mountain View, CA, resident Karen Meredith; and Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter.

Remarks on Presenting the National Medal of Arts and the National Humanities Medal

September 10, 2015

The President. Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat, have a seat. I always do pretty good with writers and scientists. [*Laughter*] That's sort of my crew.

Hello, everybody.

Audience members. Hello.

The President. On behalf of Michelle and myself, welcome to the White House for one of our favorite events of the year—love this event—when truly extraordinary artists and innovators and thinkers are recognized for their brilliance while the rest of us look on and feel totally inadequate. [*Laughter*]

I want to start by thanking a few members of our audience who help sustain the arts and the humanities in America. We have Members of Congress here. We have National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Jane Chu. Where's Jane? There she is. The National Endowment for the Humanities Chairman, Bro Adams, is here. And the Cochairs of the Presidential Committee on Arts and Humanities, George Stevens and Margo Lions. There they are.

One of our great poets, Emily Dickinson, once said that "truth is such a rare thing, it is delightful to tell it." The truth is so rare, it is delightful to tell it. And that's especially true in Washington. [*Laughter*] The men and women that we honor today, recipients of the National Medals for the Arts and the Humanities, are here not only because they've shared rare truths, often about their own experience, but because they've told rare truths about the common experiences that we have as Americans and as human beings.

They span mediums and methods. We have artists, actors, writers, musicians, historians, a landscape architect, and a chef. Without them there would be no Edible Schoolyard—[*laughter*]—no Jhumpa Lahiri novels, no really scary things like "Carrie" and "Misery." [*Laughter*]

They are versatile—poets and opera singers who were also master teachers at liberal arts colleges and Detroit Public Schools; philosophers who wrote novels. They are visual artists who work filling pages that spilled over to screens, three-dimensional gallery floors, and most of a New York City block.

And they all have one thing in common: They do what they do because of some urgent inner force, some need to express the truth that they experience, that "rare truth." And as a result, they help us understand ourselves in ways that we might not otherwise recognize. They deepen and broaden our great American story and the human story.

So we celebrate writers like Larry McMurtry, who grew up on a Texas ranch without books, but went on to pen a multitude of memoirs and essays, more than 30 novels, and cowrote screenplays for films like "Brokeback Mountain." He wrote about the Texas he knew from his own life, and then the old West as he heard it through the stories of his grandfather's—on

his grandfather's porch. And in "Lonesome Dove," the story of two ex-Texas Rangers in the 19th century, readers found out something essential about their own souls, even if they'd never been out west or been on a ranch.

We celebrate historians like Everett Fly, who studied to become both a building and landscape architect and who got his start studying forgotten African American towns and communities. Deep in the stacks of the National Archives, he encountered a map of a Freedman's Village that is now Arlington National Cemetery, which inspired him to research further. "Once I got to the National Archives and saw all of those records," Everett says, "I knew I just had to keep on working." And because he kept on working, we have come to know some 1,300 African American and Native American towns and structures across our country.

We celebrate incomparable musicians like Meredith Monk, who has been making music with the instrument of her voice for 50 years. Her singular blend of harmonies, yowls, rasps—[*laughter*]—have punctuated concert halls and films, as well as the performances of her fellow recipients here today. "I've been in fashion and out of fashion," she says. I can relate to that. [*Laughter*] "I just keep on trucking along. It's an inner necessity to work, and that's not going to change. I need to create." I need to create.

I suspect those are words that every honoree here has felt throughout their lives. And as individuals, as a nation, we are beneficiaries of that need. Fifty years ago this month, right here at the White House, President Johnson signed the Arts and Humanities Bill into law and created the NEA and the NEH. At the time, he said: "In countless American towns there live thousands of obscure and unknown talents. What this bill really does is to bring active support to this great national asset."

Half a century later—because of their raw talent and their passion and their need to create, but also because our country invests in the arts and the humanities as great national assets—some of those once obscure and unknown talents are rightly being recognized. That's what we celebrate here today: our fellow citizens, from all walks of life, who share their gifts with all of us, who make our lives and our world more beautiful, and richer, and fuller, and I think, most importantly, help us understand each other a little bit better. They help us connect.

And, as Emily Dickinson would say, that is the truth. It's delightful to tell. Or in the words of one of the recipients today, we like you. We really like you. [*Laughter*]

Now it is my privilege to present these medals to each of our recipients as their citations are read by my Military Aide. And I'm going to stand right here.

[*At this point, Lt. Cmdr. Jillian C. Malzone, USCG, Coast Guard Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medals, assisted by Maj. Wesley N. Spurlock III, USAF, Air Force Aide to the President.*]

Let's give one more big round of applause to our outstanding recipients. [*Applause*]. Yay!

So, obviously, we are extraordinarily honored to be able to just provide this moment of recognition to just some outstanding artists and writers and historians and actresses. We are grateful for the joy that you've brought us, and I'm grateful that I've gotten promises for at least a couple of signed books. [*Laughter*] And I think Alice said she's going to cook me something. [*Laughter*] So nothing unethical, just a little bit of—[*laughter*]—but I want everybody to enjoy the White House. We're not kicking you out right away. [*Laughter*] I think that there's a wonderful reception to be had here.

And once again, on behalf of Michelle and myself, let me just say thank you to all of you for everything that you've done for us. Okay?

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:51 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to 2014 National Humanities Medal recipient Alice Waters, executive

chef and owner, Chez Panisse restaurant; and 2014 National Medal of the Arts recipient actor Sally Field. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the reading of the citations.

Statement on Senate Action on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action To Prevent Iran From Obtaining a Nuclear Weapon
September 10, 2015

Today the Senate took an historic step forward and voted to enable the United States to work with our international partners to enable the implementation of the comprehensive, long-term deal that will prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. This vote is a victory for diplomacy, for American national security, and for the safety and security of the world. For nearly 2 years, we negotiated from a position of strength to reach an agreement that meets our core objectives. Since we concluded these negotiations, we have had the most consequential national security debate since the decision to invade Iraq more than a decade ago. Over the last several weeks, the more Members studied the details of this deal, the more they came out in support. Today I am heartened that so many Senators judged this deal on the merits and am gratified by the strong support of lawmakers and citizens alike. Going forward, we will turn to the critical work of implementing and verifying this deal so that Iran cannot pursue a nuclear weapon, while pursuing a foreign policy that leaves our country—and the world—a safer place.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Certain Terrorist Attacks
September 10, 2015

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1622(d), provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. Consistent with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency declared in Proclamation 7463 with respect to the terrorist attacks on the United States of September 11, 2001, is to continue in effect for an additional year.

The terrorist threat that led to the declaration on September 14, 2001, of a national emergency continues. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue in effect after September 14, 2015, the national emergency with respect to the terrorist threat.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
September 10, 2015.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at a Town Hall Meeting at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland
September 11, 2015

Technical Sergeant Nathan Parry, USAF. Well, thank you, Mr. President, for joining us here at the Defense Media Activity. It is very exciting for us to have you here for a face-to-face conversation with U.S. servicemembers. We're very, very pleased to have you.

The President. Well, Nathan, thank you so much for your participation. I want to thank everybody who's here in Fort Meade. There are a couple of people I want to acknowledge.

First of all, your garrison commander, Colonel Brian Foley. Where is he? I just rode over with him. There he is. The—he's in charge of a lot of stuff. I was—with everything that's going on out of this incredible facility. Obviously, we can't succeed in our missions without a strong support from Congress, and we've got a Congressman here who works very hard on behalf of our military and our intelligence: Congressman Dutch Ruppersberger. Where's Dutch?

Representative C.A. "Dutch" Ruppersberger. Thank you.

The President. There he is. Thank you so much, Dutch. I'm going to be very brief at the front, because I want to mainly take questions from folks not just here, but all around the world. Today is a solemn day. I started my day commemorating 9/11 and all the people who were killed on that day. And I've had an opportunity as President to meet with many of the survivors, the family members of those who were killed. And on this particular day, we are constantly reminded of their loss. We want to let them know that we do not forget those who are fallen.

We are inspired by the survivors, many of whom still have the scars, both seen and unseen, of that terrible, terrible day. And it's also a good time to remember all the people who have served and sacrificed since 9/11 in order to keep America safe and free.

We have veterans now from every State in the Union who have served oftentimes in multiple tours, both in Iraq and Afghanistan. And although we have made enormous strides in degrading the core Al Qaida, including bin Laden himself, that had helped to direct the plot on 9/11, we are well aware of the fact that those threats still exist out there.

And here at Fort Meade, we do some of the most important work in helping to coordinate our efforts to make sure that we are bringing to bear all elements of American power against those who would try to do us harm here in the homeland or overseas or would threaten our allies. Despite the progress we've made in Afghanistan, it's still critically important that we've got thousands of trainers and advisers who are supporting the Afghan military efforts there. Our combat role is complete, but we still have to make sure that they are getting the kind of help and assistance that they need.

The emergence of ISIL in Iraq and Syria has meant that we have to be present, and we are pounding them every single day. Our airmen are doing extraordinary work with the support of all the other service branches. And we are providing training and assistance and support to the Iraqi security forces on the ground as they continue to push back ISIL from territory that they had taken.

But both in Iraq and in Syria, in Afghanistan, in North Africa, what we're very clear about is, is that we still have significant threats coming from terrorist organizations and a terrorist ideology. We also have the traditional threats that our military has to be prepared for, from a new Pacific region, where historically we have underwritten the security and prosperity of a region that came back after World War II and where we have tremendous alliances, to Europe and our role as the cornerstone of NATO.

And so we are going to continually have to work at every level to make sure that our men and women in uniform are provided the strategy they need to succeed, the resources they need to succeed, the equipment, the training. And in this new era, that's not just a matter of tanks and rifles; as everybody, I think, here is

aware, especially here at Fort Meade, cybersecurity is opening up a whole new era in which we have to watch out for our adversaries.

So, on 9/11, I thought it was particularly appropriate for me to be able to address you directly and to say thank you on behalf of the American people. When I look out in this audience and when I think about all the members of the Armed Services all around the world who served, this represents America. You've got people of every race, religion, faith, every region of the country. But what we share is a common creed, a common commitment to freedom, a common commitment to rule of law, a common belief that America is an indispensable force for good around the world and that our military is a linchpin in our ability to project our values, alongside our diplomatic efforts, our economy, and the people-to-people relations that helped to spread those core beliefs that all of you are willing to sacrifice for.

So I want to say thank you to you. I want to especially say thank you to those who are serving overseas and who are watching here today, because many of them are away from family right now. We are grateful for your service. I don't have a greater honor than serving as your Commander in Chief. And every single day, I see the extraordinary work that you do and I benefit from it as well.

So, with that, why don't we start taking some questions?

T. Sgt. Parry. Yes, of course, sir. As you mentioned, we do have family members and servicemembers worldwide watching this worldwide troop talk through American Forces Network and on ships at sea. We're going to go out there in a little bit, but the first question we do want to be represented from one of the many servicemembers we have here. So the first question will go out to the audience if someone has one ready. So we have Sgt. Karnath, coming down with the microphone for you here, Sgt. Harvey.

Sergeant Harvey.

Sergeant Brianna Harvey, USA. Good morning, Mr. President—good afternoon.

The President. Good afternoon.

"My Brother's Keeper" Initiative/President's Post-Presidency Plans

Sgt. Harvey. I'm Sergeant Brianna Harvey. I'm from Texas. And my question is, what made you initiate MBK on the 27th of February in twenty—2020—2014? And will you create something similar for females? And what will you miss the most once you're no longer President and out of the Oval Office?

The President. Well, those are great questions. What part of Texas you from?

Sgt. Harvey. Harker Heights, Texas.

The President. Harker Heights, Texas.

Sgt. Harvey. Yes, Mr. President.

The President. Well, tell everybody back home I said hi.

Sgt. Harvey. Yes, sir. [*Laughter*]

The President. For servicemembers who aren't aware, what we're referring to when we talk about MBK is what we call "My Brother's Keeper." One of the most important principles, I think, of America is, is that no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, if you work hard, you can get ahead. And there are pockets of poverty in places where people don't have an opportunity, and that's particularly true among young men who too often are ending up in prison instead of going to school or serving our military.

And so what we've been trying to do is to set up mentorship programs, make sure that they're aware of what's going on, provide them with job training. I had a meeting with some folks in New Orleans—young men who just come from terrible circumstances, terrible neighborhoods—and we want to make sure that they are aware of how they can break the cycle and do right by themselves and ultimately do right by their families.

And one of the young men who was sitting next to me was interested in enrolling in the Marines, but he was worried that he had heard a rumor that he might not be able to serve in the Marines if he had tattoos. I said, I don't think—I've met a lot of Marines; I don't think that's going to be a problem. [*Laughter*]

So we're—but it gives you a sense of some young people are so out of the loop and have so

little exposure that they don't know where to go and how to apply themselves in ways that allow them to succeed. So we are working diligently on that, not just ourselves, but businesses and our military leaders are helping out on this issue.

Young women, we have a whole other set of initiatives in the White House called—we have a White House Council on Women and Girls to provide opportunity for them as well. I have to say, generally, the young women are doing better than the young men. That's because you guys are a little smarter—[*laughter*]—but obviously, they need opportunities as well.

In terms of what I'm going to miss the most, I meant what I said: The greatest privilege I have is serving as your Commander in Chief. When I travel around the world, every place I go, I see folks who are doing incredible work. And it's not typically fighting. A lot of times it's helping train other countries so that they can secure themselves. A lot of times it's helping on engineering projects or development projects or helping people after a natural disaster. You are ambassadors and spread good will around the world every single day at enormous sacrifice to yourselves. And so I'll miss that a lot.

The plane is nice too—[*laughter*]—I've got to admit, but my lease is running out. [*Laughter*] So the—I'm hoping that I'm not going to have to start taking off my shoes again going through security.

What I won't miss is the fact that I can—I live in what's called the bubble, right? So they don't let me go anywhere. So, if I just want to go take a walk, I've got to have helicopters and boats and all that stuff. And even when I cross the Potomac, they've got everybody in position. And I can't just, on a Saturday morning, go down to Starbucks or something, not shave. [*Laughter*] You know, it sounds pretty good to me. [*Laughter*] So those are some of the things I'll be doing when I get out of here. [*Laughter*] And I probably won't wear a tie for at least a month. [*Laughter*]

Okay. Thank you very much.

Sgt. Harvey. Thank you, Mr. President.

T. Sgt. Parry. Thank you, Sergeant Harvey, for that question. I promised we were going to go worldwide, sir, and we are. Your first question from overseas is a place that you are familiar with. You've traveled there a few times, and I'm sure our servicemembers are familiar with it as well. Our first question is going to come from downrange. And Petty Officer Lori Bent is going to take us there.

The President. Great.

Petty Officer Lori Bent, USN. Mr. President, we have your first live satellite question from Afghanistan. We have Sergeant Aaron Giese. Sergeant Giese, if you can hear me, go ahead and nod. You are on the live—on the line with the President. Go ahead with your question.

Al Qaida Terrorist Organization/Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/Russia's Role in Syria

Sergeant Aaron Giese, USA. Good afternoon, Mr. President. My name is Sergeant Aaron Giese, and I first want to take time to thank you for the opportunity to speak with me today.

The President. Thank you, Aaron.

Sgt. Giese. Okay. My question for you is, due to the recent Russian activity in Syria and the possibility of future activity, what—how will that affect our current military strategy within the region?

The President. Well, it's a great question, Aaron. First of all, let me just say thank you for your service, and please tell everybody in your unit that we appreciate them as well, that we're thinking about them and you're in our thoughts and prayers.

As I indicated in my opening remarks, we've done an incredible job in going after and systematically dismantling the core Al Qaida network that was operating primarily in the FATA region between Afghanistan and Pakistan. They still pose a threat, but it is much diminished. But what's happened with this radical, violent extremism is that it's metastasized and it's spread to other areas. And right now ground zero for those activities is in Syria with ISIL.

And our strategy has consistently been that we will use our airpower to support efforts by Iraqi security forces on the ground and, where we can find it, moderate opposition inside of Syria to push back on ISIL: to put pressure on them, to go after their financing, to go after their networks of—their supplies. A lot of their operations are funded by oil sales, and so blocking those, going after the infrastructure that they've built up.

Those strategies will all continue. The challenge we've had in Syria is that the President there, Bashar al-Asad, has been so destructive towards his own people, destroying entire cities, dropping bombs, creating a sectarian conflict between Shia and Sunni inside of Syria, that it has become a magnet for jihadists throughout the region.

And the good news is, is that Russia shares with us a concern about countering violent extremism and shares with us the view is that ISIL very dangerous. So, despite our conflicts with Russia in areas like Ukraine, this is an area potentially of converging interests. The bad news is that Russia continues to believe that Asad, who is their traditional partner, is somebody that is worthy of continuing support. And it has been my view and the view of the United States Government that as long as Asad is there, he has alienated so much of the Syrian population that it will not be possible to arrive at a peaceful cease-fire and political settlement, and you'll continue to have this vacuum that's filled by extremists.

So Russia has, for many years now, provided financial support, sold arms to Asad. I remember a conversation I had with Mr. Putin 4 or 5 years ago, where I told him that was a mistake, it would make things worse as long as he continued to support Asad. He did not take my warnings, and as a consequence, things have gotten worse.

It appears now that Asad is worried enough that he's inviting Russian advisers in and Russian equipment in. And that won't change our core strategy, which is to continue to put pressure on ISIL in Iraq and Syria, but we are going to be engaging Russia to let them know that you can't continue to double down on a strategy that's doomed to failure and that if they are willing to work with us and the 60-nation coalition that we've put together, then there's the possibility of a political settlement in which Asad would be transitioned out and a new coalition of moderate, secular, and inclusive forces could come together and restore order in the country.

That's our goal. We'll—this is going to be a long discussion that we'll be having with the Russians, but it is not going to prevent us from continuing to go after ISIL very hard. It could prevent us from arriving at the political settlement that ultimately is needed to bring a peace back to Syria. And this is where our military efforts have to be combined with effective diplomatic efforts.

One of the things that I've said to all of our men and women in uniform is that you shouldn't be fighting for our security and our freedom alone; you've got to have the support of diplomats and intelligence experts and others, because although you are vital and necessary, if you're doing it by yourselves, we can win any battle, but our main challenge right now in a lot of these countries—like Syria and Afghanistan and Libya and North Africa—is disorder. And the only way you restore order—unless you're occupying every country that starts breaking down—is through political negotiations and settlement. And that's where the Russians are going to have to start getting a little smarter than they have been. Because they are threatened in many ways more than we are by ISIL. They've got large Muslim populations that historically have caused a lot of problems inside of Russia. And the strategy that they're pursuing right now of doubling down on Asad I think is a big mistake.

T. Sgt. Parry. Well, thank you, Sergeant Giese, for that question from Afghanistan. We here at the Defense Media Activity do hope that you and others downrange do stay safe.

We do have thousands of members overseas watching the American Forces Network, or they're streaming live on defense.gov, and they too are eager to talk to you, Mr. President. And they can through social media. In fact, Petty

Officer Lori Bent is going to take us out there now.

September 11, 2001, Terrorist Attacks

PO Bent. Well, our next question is going to come from Twitter. Sir, we have a question from JRita2192: "Mr. President, can you share with us your personal experience and memories of when 9/11 first happened?"

The President. It was interesting—Michelle and I were just talking about that this morning.

Sasha, my youngest daughter, had just been born. She was 4 or 5 months old. And September 11 was Malia's first day of preschool or kindergarten—I think it was kindergarten. So Michelle had gone with the girls to drop Malia off at school. They were tiny. I was at the time a State senator, so I was going to downtown Chicago to a hearing on an issue.

And I remember driving on Lake Shore Drive in Chicago and hearing the reports of a plane crashing into the buildings. And at first, the reports were unclear, so you thought it was a Cessna or some accident had happened. And it wasn't until I got downtown to where the hearing was taking place that we started realizing it was something much more serious.

And at that time, no one was sure whether this was a one-off or whether this was going to be an ongoing attack, because then you started getting reports from the Pentagon and other places. And so the building was evacuated. And I remember standing downtown Chicago with thousands of other people, and there were a lot of targets, obviously, for possible action, this including—at the time, it was called the Sears Tower. And people didn't know what to think. And then, I remember going to my law office, and that's when we saw the images of the Twin Towers starting to come down.

And that evening, I have very vivid memories of giving Sasha a bottle and rocking her to sleep while we were watching the aftermath of those attacks. And like, I think, everybody here, although most of you were a lot younger, it gave you a sense, for the first time in my lifetime, that our homeland could be vulnerable in that way. We hadn't seen an attack like that since Pearl Harbor.

And I think it inspired all of us to remember just how precious what we have is, and the need for us to defend it at any cost. And although subsequently I would have strong disagreements with the previous administration about certain decisions that were made, I remember and give great credit to President Bush for being at the site, throwing out that first pitch at Yankee Stadium, and everyone remembering that you're not a Democrat first or a Republican first or a Texan first or Californian first, you're an American, and that we all have to come together.

And my hope is always on a day like today that we remember that sense that what binds us together is much more important than anything that divides us and that what makes this country special is the fact that we are bound together. We or our parents or our great-grandparents, we all come from different places, but we all have a shared creed, a shared belief system, and a shared set of commitments. And all of you in your service exemplify that every day. Okay?

T. Sgt. Parry. It was an excellent question from social media. And our viewers can join us and join this conversation on social media from Twitter using the hashtag #askPOTUS, or the Department of Defense's Facebook page. We're actually going to go back overseas for you, Mr. President, and Petty Officer Lori Bent is going to take us there.

PO Bent. Sir, we are headed to NATO—Brussels, Belgium—where we're going to talk to Navy Commander Scot Cregan. Commander Cregan, go ahead with your question for the President.

Syrian Refugee Crisis/North Atlantic Treaty Organization/Climate Change

Lieutenant Commander Scot Cregan, USN. Thank you for your time, Mr. President. I was honored to march in your Inaugural parade in 2009, and we briefly met a few years later when I worked a Halloween White House event. I was a Star Wars storm trooper.

The President. You were great.

Lt. Cmdr. Cregan. You may not remember what I looked like because we all kind of

looked alike. [*Laughter*] On a serious note, we're seeing more and more refugees coming to Europe by land and by sea. Do you think there should be a NATO response to this crisis?

The President. I think that we have to work with our European partners on this issue. The refugee crisis is not just a European problem, it's a world problem. And we have obligations.

I made certain to send through every agency that we've got to do our part, first of all, in taking our share of refugees. And those of you who saw some of these heartbreaking images of that small boy drowned, I think anybody who's a parent understands that that stirs all of our consciences, not just folks on the other side of the Atlantic.

So I've already been in discussions with people like Prime Minister Renzi of Italy, the Greeks, and others who are down south about how we can enhance maritime efforts to make sure, first of all, that people who are loading up on these rickety boats are safe and we're not seeing enormous loss of life there. We are encouraged by the efforts of the European Union to accept refugees in all countries and spread out some of the burdens and the pressure.

And as I said, the United States needs to do our share. I said that we should establish a floor of at least 10,000 refugees that we're willing to accept and cut through some of the bureaucracy and redtape to do that.

Ultimately, though, as you well know, it is really important for us to go to the source. There's the old story about if you see a bunch of bodies floating down a river, part of your job is to pull those folks out and save who you can, but you've also got to go downstream and see what exactly is happening. And this refugee crisis is prompted by the collapse of governance in Syria and the growth of ISIL and the cruelty that Asad is perpetrating on his own people.

And that's why the response I gave earlier, the importance of us continuing our military efforts against ISIL, but also trying to pull together a strong international, diplomatic effort to bring about some sort of political accord inside of Syria is going to be so important and so vital.

Last point I'll make about this, though, and this is where NATO planning becomes critical, even as we're, in the short term, helping countries respond to the immediate crisis: Unfortunately, we can anticipate that refugees will be an ongoing problem for decades to come, and the reason is because there are too many states that are not doing well by their people. The spread of media gives people in war-torn countries or in extreme poverty a vision of a better life, and they are desperate and willing to take extraordinary risks to get there.

You then have other factors that are—that may end up resulting in more migration and refugees—for example, climate change. I just came back from Alaska, where you're seeing glaciers melt rapidly. And as temperatures rise, the Pentagon's own assessment is that this will end up being a national security challenge, in part because people will be displaced from their traditional lands either by drought or by flooding, and that can create more refugee problems.

So we're going to have to work globally. And one of the topics, I'm sure, when I go to the United Nations General Assembly leaders gathering that we typically have at the end of this month is to start coming up with a more effective structure for an international response. No one country can solve these problems alone. But the United States, obviously, as the world's leader, and NATO, as the premier alliance in the world, is going to have to play a central role.

T. Sgt. Parry. I want to thank the lieutenant commander for that question.

Mr. President, we've been to Europe, to Afghanistan, we've gone online, so I think it's time we come back to the studio here at the Defense Media Activity for a question.

The President. Let's do it.

Cybersecurity/China

T. Sgt. Parry. And we'll have one of our mike people. Looks like we have a question up front.

Q. Good afternoon, Mr. President. CTN1 Rick Rickel from Arizona. You allude to, in

your opening remarks, the threat that cyber currently is. And there's been a lot of talk within the DOD and the cyber community of the possibility of a separate branch of the military dedicated to cyber. But I was wondering where you see cyber in the next 5 to 10 years.

The President. Well, it's a great question. The—we initiated Cyber Command, anticipating that this is going to be a new theater for potential conflict. And what we've seen by both state and nonstate actors is the increasing sophistication of hacking, the ability to penetrate systems that we previously thought would be secure. And it is moving fast. So offense is moving a lot faster than defense.

Now, part of this has to do with the way the Internet was originally designed. It was not designed with the expectation that there would end up being 3 or 4 or 5 billion people doing commercial transactions, et cetera. It was thought this was just going to be an academic network to share papers and formulas and whatnot. And so the architecture of the Internet makes it very difficult to defend consistently.

We continue to be the best in the world at understanding and working within cyber. But other countries have caught up. The Russians are good. The Chinese are good. The Iranians are good. And you've got nonstate actors, hackers, who are excellent. And unlike traditional conflicts and aggression, oftentimes, we don't have a return address. If somebody hacks into a system and goes after critical infrastructure, for example, or penetrates our financial systems, we can't necessarily trace it directly to that state or that actor. That makes it more difficult as well.

So what we've done is to try to emphasize, number one, the need for a coordinated response. And over the last several years, what we've done is to bring together our military agencies, Cyber Command, with the NSA, with our intelligence, and working with the private sector to try to strengthen our defenses much better. And we've made progress, but we're not making enough progress. So I would anticipate that we are going to have to do more both through the Defense Department, but again, we're going to have to work—because this is not a traditional war theater, we're going to have to work with a whole bunch of other actors and coordinate with them much more effectively.

The bulk of vulnerable information and data isn't in our military; it's in the private sector. It's throughout our economy. It's on your smartphones. And so we're going to have to both strengthen overall networks, but we're also going to have to train millions of individual actors—small businesses, big vendors, individuals—in terms of basic cyberhygiene. We're going to have to be much more rapid in responding to attacks.

And this is something that we're just at the infancy of. Ultimately, one of the solutions we're going to have to come up with is to craft agreements among at least state actors about what's acceptable and what's not. And so, for example, I'm going to be getting a visit from President Xi of China, a state visit here coming up in a couple of weeks. We've made very clear to the Chinese that there are certain practices that they're engaging in that we know are emanating from China and are not acceptable. And we can choose to make this an area of competition—which, I guarantee you, we'll win if we have to—or alternatively, we can come to an agreement in which we say, this isn't helping anybody; let's instead try to have some basic rules of the road in terms of how we operate.

Now, as I said, there's still going to be individual actors, there are going to be terrorist networks and others, so we're still going to have to build a strong defense. But one of our first and most important efforts has to be to get the states that may be sponsoring cyber attacks to understand that there comes a point at which we consider this a core national security threat and we will treat it as such. Okay? Thank you.

T. Sgt. Parry. That was an excellent question from one of our cyber warriors here at Fort Meade, Maryland.

The President. He looks like he knows what he's doing. [*Laughter*]

T. Sgt. Parry. Well, we are here on the East Coast, but I hear Petty Officer Lori Bent wants

to take us all the way to the West Coast for your next question.

PO Bent. Yes, our next question comes from Joint Base Lewis-McChord from a C–17 instructor pilot, Major Jennifer Moore.

Major Moore, go ahead with your question.

Support for Military Families/The President's Childrearing Advice

Major Jennifer Moore, USAF. Mr. President, good afternoon. Sir, both my husband and I have been serving side by side as C–17 and T–6 instructor pilots for the past 11 years, and we have two amazing and thriving children. How do you and Mrs. Obama know how to balance life and work to ensure your children will grow up to be successful in their future endeavors?

The President. Well, first of all, thanks to you and your husband both for serving. And tell your kids I said hi and that they should do what you tell them to do. [*Laughter*] How old are your kids?

Maj. Moore. Well, my daughter Gabby's 7 and my son Robert is 4. I have a picture, sir. It would kill me if I didn't have an opportunity to show you.

The President. Sure. Hold up the picture. [*Laughter*] Oh, that's a good-looking crew right there. They're adorable.

Maj. Moore. Absolutely. The happiest place on Earth. Thank you, sir.

The President. Well, I'll give you—the best advice that I probably can offer is for me, at least, I just do what Michelle tells me to do and it seems to work out. [*Laughter*] And your husband may take the same approach. And those are great ages, 7 and 4, because they—you come home and they're jumping on you and so excited to see you. When they get to be 17 and 14, then they still love you, but you're not very interesting. [*Laughter*]

But everybody here, the demands of your jobs are so extraordinary, and it's not like you're always on the clock, you've just got to get the job done. And that puts a lot of pressure on folks. One thing I know we can do is make sure that our military is supporting families, and that means making sure that housing and childcare, all the things that go into supporting families when they're stationed—particularly, given how much they're moving—becomes absolutely critical.

And Michelle has worked with Dr. Jill Biden on Joining Forces to make sure that we are spending a lot of time thinking about how are we supporting military families on an ongoing basis, including those spouses who are not in service, but who are serving alongside and do so much critical work, making sure that they have the opportunity, for example, to find a job if they're getting transferred and have the kind of backing that they need. So that's really important. You shouldn't have to do this alone.

What Michelle and I did with Malia and Sasha, I think, early on is, we just—we're a strong believer in structure and rules and unconditional love, but being pretty firm too. We started real early: Here's your bedtime, here's when you're not watching TV. You'll sit there and eat your vegetables even if we have to sit there with you, watch you chew for 10 minutes—[*laughter*]—and we're going to watch you swallow. [*Laughter*] And if you start early enough with just high expectations, I think kids do well with that.

And part of that involves just loving those kids to death, but also letting them know, you know what, I'm your parent, I'm not your best friend. So I'm not that interested in what your friends are doing. That's—they've got parents; their parents can make a decision. This is what you're doing in our house. And when you leave here, you'll be able to make your own decisions, but we're trying to prepare you so that you've got some sense when you get out of here.

And I think that's worked. I think that's been appreciated. Sometimes, they complain. They say, well, how come so-and-so is able to stay out until whatever hour? It's like, well, that's not really our problem, is it? [*Laughter*] And I—they're getting old enough now where sometimes they appreciate it, mainly because they also know that we just—we adore them.

And last thing, I guess, is just, as much as possible, we try to make sure every night when we're home that they have to sit down and eat

dinner with us. I'm a big believer in not getting the TV trays out and watching the "Kardashians." [*Laughter*] You sit down, leave your cell phone somewhere else, and we'll have a conversation. And that seems to help too. All right?

So that's all, by the way, me just channeling Michelle. Like I said, the main thing for your husband to do is just listen to you. [*Laughter*]

T. Sgt. Parry. That was an excellent question, and I know my wife Jazzy would agree. I listen to her day in and day out.

Maj. Moore. I'll tell him that, sir. Thank you very much.

The President. Thank you.

T. Sgt. Parry. And I know, I'm sure all of our servicemembers who have families would agree, a large part of why we do what we do and how we can do what we do is those loved ones we have at home.

The President. Absolutely.

T. Sgt. Parry. So I'm sure we all appreciate our family members there. So we do have family members watching on American Forces Network—I know my wife, she's watching on defense.gov right now with my 2-year-old son—and they have an opportunity to talk to you as well through social media.

The President. Excellent.

T. Sgt. Parry. And we're going to take—Petty Officer Lori Bent is going to take us there now.

Public Service/U.S. Auto Industry/Former Al Qaida Terrorist Organization Leader Usama bin Laden/Health Care Reform

PO Bent. We are headed online to Facebook. Sir, this question is coming from Michael Ong: "Mr. President, how do you keep striving for great accomplishments with a positive attitude while everyone seems to be hating and talking smack about you and all you do?" [*Laughter*]

The President. Yeah! [*Laughter*] You know, the truth is, is that not everyone is talking smack about me. [*Laughter*] But there is a sizable percentage in Congress that talks smack about me, no doubt about it. [*Laughter*] You know, it's interesting, when you go into public service, I think there are two ways to approach it. One way to approach it is that you just want to be popular. You want to get elected, you want to stay in office, you want to be popular. Another way of approaching it is, I want a particular position because I want to get something done for the American people. And not everything that is right to do is going to be the popular thing to do.

And I made a decision early on that if I was going to do this, if I was going to run for elected office, that I had to have some core, some set of beliefs and principles, and that there would be times where I made mistakes or I made a wrong call, but that I was guided by what I thought was best for the American people and that I couldn't worry about short-term popularity if I was going to do my best.

So I'll give you a good example. When I came into office, early on, we had the worst financial crisis in our history. One of the casualties of that was the U.S. auto industry. The Big Three automakers were on the verge of flatlining and were getting all these bailouts, but they weren't changing what they were doing. And a lot of folks thought that Chrysler was going to go bankrupt and then GM was going to go next and then all the suppliers would lose out, and pretty soon, all we would be able to buy is Japanese and Korean and German cars.

And I said, this is an industry that's too important—one that we essentially built—for us to be able to just let it go. And I knew that we had to put more money into it to get it—the industry back on its feet, but I also knew that we had to force them to make management changes so they could start building good cars and competing again.

Well, I tell you, when we put forward our plan, I think that 10 percent of people agreed with it. Even in Michigan, I think the overwhelming majority of people opposed it, opposed our plan. And if I had been thinking in terms of just looking at the poll numbers, I wouldn't have done it. But I looked at the evidence and what I thought was going to be best, and we did it. And this year, we're probably going to sell more U.S. cars than we have in 20 years, and they've hired back hundreds of thousands of workers, and it's been driving a

rebound of American manufacturing that is vital to our economy.

So the longer I'm in this office, the more committed I am to making those calls. And we—and part of the challenge in this job is, is that if it's an easy question, it doesn't get to my desk. The only things that come to my desk are things that somebody else hasn't been able to solve. And my job is to make a decision based on sometimes imperfect information and you're working on the percentages.

When I made the order for us to go in and get bin Laden at that house in Pakistan, it was probably a 50–50 proposition as to whether that was, in fact, him, and the risks obviously were enormous. If I had been making that decision based on wanting to avoid risk and not having somebody talk smack about me—[*laughter*]—then that might not be a decision that I would have been prepared to make.

So I tend—and part of this is my own personal faith and prayer, and part of it is the support of an incredible family and friends. And part of it is seeing the sacrifices that all of you make. When I go to Walter Reed and I visit wounded troops, then I say to myself, well, I've got to be serious about what I do, and I can't be worrying about poll numbers or what cable TV says. I've got to make sure that I am, to the best of my abilities, making the decisions that I think are going to be most important for American prosperity and American security over the long term.

And that way, you can at least sleep at night. That way when I go to bed, I go to bed easy, because I know that I've made the best decisions I could make.

Now, the only way that works is if I'm also open and listening to see if the decisions I made were the right ones. Is it working? And I've got to be open to the fact that sometimes I may not make the right decision, and I'm willing to correct it. And I've got to own that. And that's what I always tell everybody in the White House, is if somebody screws up—because there will be some screw-ups—own it and correct it and learn from it. And what applies to everybody on my team applies to me as well.

So you'll—I think some of you may recall when we passed health care, everything was working fine until there was this website that didn't work. [*Laughter*] It was a disaster, even though I had been asking every 2 weeks: "How's the website going? I hope this works." But it didn't work. And we had to own that and double down. And we corrected it in 3 or 4 months, and now 16 million people have health insurance that didn't have it before, and it actually costs less than people anticipated. It's working the way it should have. But that was a screw-up, and there's no point in trying to hide things when they don't work.

So I guess the last thing I'd say is, I tend to just take the long view on things. I—political polls and what the pundits say and what other politicians say, that comes and goes. It goes up and goes down. I try to think 20 years from now, when I look back, will people say, this person operated with integrity and made decisions that were best for the country. And so far, that's working for me, anyway.

It doesn't mean I'm not sometimes a little offended. [*Laughter*] That's why I go to the gym, work it off.

T. Sgt. Parry. All right. Well, Mr. President, your next question—Petty Officer Lori Bent is going to take us overseas.

The President. Excellent.

PO Bent. Sir, your next question is coming from Gunnery Sergeant Bryson Elliott, and he's at U.S. AFRICOM Stuttgart, Germany. Gunny, go ahead with your question.

Africa/Africa-U.S. Counterterrorism Cooperation

Gunnery Sergeant Bryson Elliott, USMC. First of all, sir, thank you. Good afternoon. Thank you for taking my question. Mr. President, my question is, how are military exercises like African Lion with Morocco strengthening the relationships between the U.S. and African nations?

The President. Well, it's a great question. And thank you for your service. Tell everybody at AFRICOM we appreciate them.

I just came back from Africa several months ago, and there are huge challenges there, but also huge opportunities. First of all, that's a

continent that appreciates America. When you look at polls, the continent as a whole, their positive views of America are as high as any other continent in the world. So the people of the African Continent admire the United States. They appreciate our values and our way of life, and there's a real connection.

It also is the continent with some of the fastest growing economies in the world. I think we tend to have stereotypes about Africa as Ebola and poverty and all this stuff. When you travel there, they're moving. And you go to cities there, and everybody has got a cell phone, and everybody is hustling, and everybody is working. And that's going to be one of the great next arenas for economic growth and trade. And that means that the United States is selling more goods there and they're selling more here, and there are enormous opportunities. So our prosperity with them is tied together.

What is also true is, is that there are parts of Africa—particularly North Africa, but it's seeping down along the coasts—where violent Islamic extremism has taken hold. And Somalia being a prime example where al-Shabaab has been working for a long time; Boko Haram in Nigeria; Al Qaida in the Maghreb. And so we have to have a strategy to partner with those countries to ensure that our intelligence capabilities, our rapid response capabilities, and their own capabilities for maintaining order and pushing back against extremism, that they are a lot stronger in the years to come.

The good news is that these countries are eager for that kind of cooperation. Countries like Nigeria, countries like Kenya welcome our presence, welcome our training of their troops. We have excellent CT cooperation with them. The big problem they've got is capacity, but capacity is one of those things you can solve where you've got a willing partner.

So we're working with the Joint Chiefs to develop plans so that we are continuing to build up partnership capabilities across the continent. And that will help us not only with homegrown problems inside of Africa, but those platforms then also allow us to act more effectively against deeply rooted organizations like Al Qaida on the peninsula in Yemen, because that's right across the ocean, and we want to be able to make sure that we can target those terrorist networks effectively. Having African partners helps us do that.

T. Sgt. Parry. Mr. President, we're hoping to squeeze in at least one more question.

The President. Come on.

T. Sgt. Parry. Excellent. Because I promised you earlier, we have viewers out at sea. In fact, that's where Petty Officer Lori Bent is going to take us now.

The President. Fantastic.

PO Bent. And what do you know, this sailor is going to take you out to sea for your next question, Mr. President. This is coming from the deployed USS *Theodore Roosevelt,* and on the phone, we have Petty Officer Joseph Everett. Petty Officer Everett, you are on the line. Go ahead.

PO Joseph Everett, USN. Good afternoon, Mr. President. I'm Petty Officer Joseph Everett calling you from the *Theodore Roosevelt.* I just want to thank you for taking the time to talk to me.

The President. Hey, Joe.

Q. I'm very honored to have this opportunity.

The President. Hold on, Joe, we're having trouble hearing you here. Slight technical difficulties. But if somebody can hear, they can repeat the question to us.

T. Sgt. Parry. Petty Officer Everett, would you like to try that question again?

PO Everett. Good afternoon, Mr. President. This is Petty Officer Joseph Everett calling you from the *Theodore Roosevelt.* I just want to thank you for giving me this opportunity today, and I'm very honored.

The President. Well, I can hear you just fine now, Joe. And tell everybody on the ship we appreciate them, hope they get back home safe. You've got a question for us?

The President's Most Rewarding Experiences

PO Everett. Yes, Mr. President. During your Presidency, you've had a lot of great experiences. What would you say is your most rewarding?

The President. That's—wow. Well, that's a big question. I tell you that there are different

kinds of rewarding experiences obviously in this office. But across the board, what ends up being most rewarding for me is when somebody comes up to me in a rope line when I'm appearing someplace or at some event, and they say, "Mr. President, you helped me."

I've had moms come up and say: "Mr. President, my son, who's 25 years old, didn't have health insurance when you passed that law to make sure that he could stay on my health insurance. He finally got a checkup after 3, 4 years. They found a tumor, but they were able to get it out in time and now he's doing fine, and I appreciate it."

Or we have White House tours of wounded warriors, and once, this wonderful couple was there, both the husband and wife were servicemembers. They had two adorable little kids. And as I was coining them and shaking their hands, one of them said—the wife said, "I just want to thank you because you saved our family." Because the husband had had PTSD and—but wasn't getting help, and she had written to us, and I had had folks at DOD reach out, and he had gotten counseling and now was doing well, and the family was thriving.

A lot of times, this stuff seems abstract, and there's just a bunch of folks talking on television, and it all seems like politics and arguing. But one of the things that you learn the longer you're in this is that these decisions matter and you're touching people directly in some kind of way. And when you hear that something you did actually helped, then you say to yourself, all right, this was worth it, this was a good day.

And I know that everybody here feels that same way. There are going to be frustrations in our work. There are going to be challenges in our work. Many of you operate in obscurity, and people don't always say thank you. But then, every once in a while, you see that, all right, what I did helped, made a difference. Somebody is safer. Somebody who was hungry has eaten. Somebody whose home was destroyed, now they've got shelter. Somebody whose village had been overrun, now they've got a chance at some security and some freedom. And that's what keeps you going. That's what inspires you.

So those are the most gratifying moments of my Presidency. And the plane is cool. [*Laughter*] And Marine One. I don't want to leave the Marines out.

T. Sgt. Parry. Well, Mr. President, we know one of those challenges is that you do have other obligations and time constraints. I want to thank you on the part of Defense Media Activity, our soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen across the world, and the Coast Guard, as we are representing the Coast Guard here as well. Thank you. And if you have any final remarks for us.

The President. I just want to say thank you to all of you and to your family members for your extraordinary service. What you do is vital to our way of life. It is vital to our country.

I started off talking about 9/11 and how shaken all of us were and angry and frustrated and moved by it. But when you travel to New York now, there's a new tower soaring in the sky. And those first responders—the cops and the firemen and the EMTs—a lot of them are still serving and still doing great work every day. And it's just a good reminder of the essential spirit of the American people.

We don't always get things perfect the first time. There are times where we take a hit. There are times where, unfortunately, we have self-imposed problems because of politics or conflicts inside our own country. Our politics—our political system is not always serving people the way it should. One of the things that we haven't had a chance to talk about is the fact that Congress has a budget that it's supposed to be passing at the end of this month and we've been operating under what's called a sequester, which is hampering our ability to finance the kind of readiness and modernization and research and development and support for our troops that's needed. It's also preventing us from funding education and job training and infrastructure that is vital for our long-term economic competitiveness.

I hope Congress is paying attention to how you operate and how you do your job, because if they were as conscientious about it and selfless about it, then that sequester would be lifted, and we would end up being in a position

where we could make the investments we need to stay strong, militarily and economically.

So we've got challenges. But just think about how we've bounced back: from 9/11, from the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. America is the strongest, the most prosperous, and the most diverse country on Earth. And the 20th—21st century is being shaped by our ideas of the Internet and of international trade and free markets. And the reason for all of that is because of our people.

Sometimes, we hear about all the bad stuff that's going on, especially during political season. But America is strong. And it's strong because of all of you. And I never want you to forget that. You should be very proud of what you do and very proud of the people that you represent in uniform every single day, because this country is full of good, generous, hard-working people, and they rely on you, and they are grateful to you.

All right? Tell your families I said hi back home. All right? Thank you, everybody.

T. Sgt. Parry. Ladies and gentlemen, our Commander in Chief.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:53 p.m. in Studio 1 of Defense Media Activity. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; and Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden. He also referred to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action To Prevent Iran From Obtaining a Nuclear Weapon
September 11, 2015

Today's vote in the House of Representatives is the latest indication that the more Members have studied the historic deal that will prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, the more they have come out in support of it. As we conclude the most consequential national security debate since the decision to invade Iraq, I am gratified that the lawmakers, led by Democratic Leader Pelosi, who have taken care to judge the deal on the merits are joining our allies and partners around the world in taking steps that will allow for the implementation of this long-term, comprehensive deal. Now, we must turn to the critical work of implementing and verifying this deal so that Iran cannot pursue a nuclear weapon. In doing so, we'll write the latest chapter of American leadership in the pursuit of a safer, more hopeful world.

The President's Weekly Address
September 12, 2015

Hi, everybody. Next week marks 7 years since a financial crisis on Wall Street that would usher in some hard years for working families on Main Street. Soon after that, I took office. And we set out to rebuild our economy on a new foundation for growth and prosperity by investing in things that grow our middle class: things like jobs, health care, and education.

Today, our businesses have created more than 13 million new jobs over the last 5½ years. The unemployment rate is the lowest it's been in more than 7 years. Another 16 million Americans have gained health insurance. Our high school graduate rate is the highest it's ever been, and more people are graduating from college than ever before. We are coming back and stronger.

Still, in an economy that's increasingly based on knowledge and innovation, some higher education is the surest ticket to the middle class. By the end of this decade, two in three job openings will require some higher education. And that's one reason why a degree from a 2-year college will earn you $10,000 more each year than someone who only finished high

school. One study showed that a degree from a 4-year university earns you $1 million more over the course of a lifetime.

The country with the best educated workforce in the world is going to win the 21st-century economy. I want that to be America. But as college costs and student debt keep rising, the choices that Americans make when searching for and selecting a college have never been more important. That's why everyone should be able to find clear, reliable, open data on college affordability and value, like whether they're likely to graduate, find good jobs, and pay off their loans. Right now, however, many existing college rankings reward schools for spending more money and rejecting more students at a time when America needs our colleges to focus on affordability and supporting all students who enroll. That doesn't make sense, and it has to change.

So today my administration is launching a new College Scorecard, designed with input from those who will use it the most: students, families, and counselors. Americans will now have access to reliable data on every institution of higher education. You'll be able to see how much each school's graduates earn, how much debt they graduate with, and what percentage of a school's students can pay back their loans, which will help all of us see which schools do the best job of preparing America for success. And to reach more folks, we're working with partners in the academic, nonprofit, and private sectors that will help families use this new data to navigate the complicated college process and make informed decisions.

The status quo serves some colleges and the companies that rank them just fine. But it doesn't serve always our students well, and that doesn't serve any of us well. There are colleges dedicated to helping students of all backgrounds learn without saddling them with debt. We should hold everybody to that standard. Our economic future depends on it.

Now, this work is just beginning. In the coming weeks and months, we'll continue to improve the Scorecard based on what we learn from students, parents, counselors, and colleges themselves. The goal is to help everybody who's willing to work for a higher education search for and select a college that fits their goals. Together, we can make sure that every student has the chance to get a great education and achieve their full potential.

Thanks, everybody. And have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 8:55 a.m. on September 11 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on September 12. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 11, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on September 12.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at a Town Hall Meeting at North High School in Des Moines, Iowa
September 14, 2015

The President. Everybody, give it up for Russhaun! Hello, Iowa! Well, it is good to be back in Iowa. I was missing you guys. Go Polar Bears! It is great to be back in Des Moines. You know, I landed at the airport and saw the Hampton Inn there that I—I must have stayed there, like, a hundred days. [*Laughter*] I'm sure I've got some points or something. I could get a couple free nights at the Hampton Inn. [*Laughter*]

Everybody, have a seat. Have a seat. Relax. And I know——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. [*Laughter*] I know it's September, so I know you guys are all about to be flooded with ads and calls from a bunch of folks who want this job. [*Laughter*] I just can't imagine what kind of person would put themselves through something like this. [*Laughter*] Although, I noticed—I didn't know Russhaun was on the ballot. During the introduction, he was all, like, "the next President of the United States."

We could not be prouder of Russhaun, not just for the introduction, but for the inspiring story that he's told. I think it's an example of what our young people can do when they put their minds to it.

I want to thank your principal, Mike Vukovich. Where's Mike? There he is. Your superintendent is here; Tom Ahart is here. Where's Tom? Your mayor, Frank Cownie, is here, who is a great friend. Where's Frank? He was here. [*Laughter*] He had to go to a city council meeting. He's missing out on the fun. Iowa attorney general and great friend of mine, Tom Miller. Treasurer Mike Fitzgerald, great supporter. And of course, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, for letting me crash his bus tour.

And so I'm not going to give a long speech, because we want to spend most of the time taking questions from all of you. But I just want to explain that we came to North High School because you guys have done some great things over the past few years: making sure more students have laptops and iPads, more AP classes, improving test scores. And so you've become a great example for the whole country of what's possible.

And so we thought we'd come to pay you a visit, talk with some of the students here in Des Moines and your parents. Because I know that there's nothing that high schoolers love more than being in public with their moms and dads. [*Laughter*] I know that. That's what Malia and Sasha tell me all the time. [*Laughter*]

It was 7 years ago this week that a financial crisis on Wall Street ended up ushering in some really hard years on Main Street. But thanks to the incredible resilience and grit and hard work of the American people, we've bounced back. We've created 13.1 million new private sector jobs over the past 5½ years. We've helped more than 16 million people have the security of health insurance, many of them for the first time. Our high school graduation rate is the highest that it has ever been. And I should point out, by the way, if you want to see the best graduation rate in America, it's right here in Iowa.

So we've been investing in things that help to grow the middle class and help provide opportunity for every young person. But no 21st-century economy is—nobody in a 21st-century economy is going to be able to do what they want to do with their lives unless they've got a great education. That's just the truth. By 2020, two in three job openings are going to require some form of post–high school education, whether it's a 4-year university or a community college or a tech school. And it's an investment that pays off.

Now, partly it pays off—and Russhaun mentioned this—because it empowers you. It gives you a sense of who you are and your hopes and your dreams. It helps to sharpen how you see the world and empowers you in all sorts of ways. But it also has some pretty practical ramifications. Compared to a high school diploma, a degree from a 2-year school could earn you an extra $10,000 a year; a 4-year degree could earn you a million dollars more over the course of your lifetime. That's how important education is in today's economy.

And here's the thing: Just as higher education has never been more important, let's face it, it's also never been more expensive. And that's why Arne and I have been working to try to make college and post–high school education more affordable. We've increased scholarships. We reformed our student loan system that funneled billions of taxpayer dollars into big banks; we said, let's cut out the middleman, let's put that money directly to students. We created a new tax credit of up to $2,500 to help working families pay for tuition and books and fees. We're helping people cap their Federal student loan payments at 10 percent of their income. So, if you want to be a teacher or you want to be a social worker or some other profession that may not make a huge amount of money, you can still do that, knowing that you're not going to go—you're still going to be able to afford to support yourself and your family while doing it. And we're fighting for 2 years of free community college for any student that's willing to work for it.

The bottom line is, is that no young person in America should be priced out of college. They should not be priced out of an education.

And I know that finding the right school for you, the best school for you is a tough process. Malia is going through it right now. You guys are juggling deadlines and applications and personal statements. And some of you are, in the back of your mind, are asking yourselves what you plan for a career and what you want to do with your life.

I think we should make that process easier. So a couple of things that we've done that we're announcing over the course of this week during Arne's bus tour, we've introduced something called College Scorecard. Right now a lot of families don't have all the information they need to choose the right school. And a lot of the college ranking systems that you see, they reward schools just for spending more money or for rejecting more students. And I think that's the wrong focus. I think that our colleges should be focusing on affordability and on serving students and providing them good value.

So we've pulled together all sorts of data on college costs and value; we created this College Scorecard. And you can scroll through it to see which schools are more likely to graduate their students, are more likely to result in good jobs for those students, more likely to make sure that those students can pay off their student loans, and you can then use that information to make choices that are right for your future and right for your budget.

And so you guys can go to collegescorecard.ed.gov—collegescorecard.ed.gov—and we've already got half a million visits since we launched this thing on Saturday. So it's a valuable tool for students and parents as you're trying to make a decision about which school to go to.

We're also simplifying the financial aid process to give you more time as you make a decision. Right now about 2 million students don't claim the financial aid that they're eligible for. And part of it is, it's just complicated and time-consuming. And so those young people are leaving money on the table. And there may be some young people here who are not aware of all the financial help you can get. So what we've done is, we've shortened the Federal student aid form—it's called FAFSA—down to about 20 minutes. It used to be about two, three times as long. [*Laughter*]

And because only Congress has the power to eliminate certain requirements, we're asking them to simplify it even further. The good news is, it's got some good bipartisan support. In fact, we've got a Congressman here from Virginia who traveled with us—Congressman Bobby Scott—where's Bobby? He is—there he is way in the back there. And he's working—he's a Democrat—he's working with Republicans to see if we can further shorten and make this form simpler.

Today I'm also announcing that beginning next year, families will be able to fill out FAFSA even earlier: starting at—on October 1, right around the time that college applications ramp up. That means you won't have to wait for months for your W–2's to arrive before you can get started, so you can get a jump on the college application process. You'll know sooner how much aid you qualify for; you'll have more time to evaluate your options. And we're also working with colleges and universities and scholarship programs to align their application and their financial aid processes with this new FAFSA start date.

So all these steps taken together should help hundreds of thousands more students pay for college. And I know that's important to you.

I'm going to end my opening remarks with a story from somebody who couldn't be here today, but graduated from here last year, and his name is Neico Greene. You might remember Neico from the Polar Bear basketball team. And the reason that I want to tell his story is, for the past few years, Neico was homeless. As a junior and senior, he was grateful to mostly stay with his coach or his counselor. But before that, he spent nights in shelters and in church basements or in hotels with his mom, sometimes sleeping next to drug addicts or worse. And this is something Neico wrote. He said, "I've seen some terrible things . . . but I'm thankful for what I've been through because it's taught me to be strong."

And being strong meant studying. It meant keeping his eye on college, applying for and

winning some scholarships. Last year, he filled out his FAFSA, found out he qualified for thousands of dollars of Federal and State aid. Today, Neico is a freshman at Graceland University. He's studying accounting. He's still playing ball, hoping to make enough money one day to build a career and give back to the mom that he loves.

So that's why we're here. That's what this is about. For students like Neico and Russhaun. Students like many of you who want to take that next step and have big dreams, we want you to know that we're there to help you achieve those dreams. We want to make sure that we're giving every student who's willing to put in the effort all the tools that they need in order to succeed.

That's not just good for the students, by the way. That's also good for America. Because this country was built on the notion that it doesn't matter where you come from, what you look like, what your last name is, if you're willing to work hard, you can make it. And education is the key to making that future possible. That's how we grow this country. That's how we make it successful. And that's the incredible project, the great experiment in democracy that all of you are part of.

So, with that, Arne and I are looking forward to taking your questions. Thank you very much, everybody.

All right. Can everybody hear me? Is this thing working?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. All right, so here's how this is going to work. You raise your hand, and I'll call on you. We're going to go girl, boy, girl, boy to make it fair. [*Laughter*] There should be people in the audience with microphones, so wait until they get there. And introduce yourself. Try to keep your question short enough that we can get as many questions in as possible.

And contrary to what Arne said, he's going to get all the tough questions, and I just want the easy ones. [*Laughter*] All right. So let's see—who wants to go first? Oh, well, this young lady, she shot her hand up quick. Right here. The—we need a microphone up here. All right.

Teachers

Q. Okay. Hi, my name is Angelica. And my question is for you. It's what do you believe the role of a teacher should be?

The President. What do I believe the role of the—of teacher should be? That's a great question. When I think about my own life, some of you may know, my dad left when I was very young, so I really didn't know him. So I was raised by a single mom. And we didn't have a lot when we were coming up, although my mom had this great love of learning. But she was a teenager when she had me; she was 18. And she was still going to school and working at the same time as she was raising me and then my sister.

She was my first great teacher. And what she taught me was compassion, caring about other people, but she also taught me to be curious. And when I think back to all the great teachers that I've had, it's not so much the facts that they've taught me, because I can get those from books, but it has been teachers who are able to spark in me a sense of curiosity, like, well, how does that work? Why are—is that the way it is? Who—somebody who has helped me want to learn more. That, to me, is the role of a great teacher. Somebody who can teach you to be so interested in the subject that you then start over time teaching yourself.

And I'll bet there are a lot of great teachers here. Part of the challenge, I think, for being a teacher is, is that sometimes students don't always appreciate good teachers, let's face it. Because I think sometimes we think education is something that you just receive from somebody else. It's passive. They just kind of pour knowledge in here.

But in fact, good teaching is a conversation that you're having with somebody where they're giving you not just answers, but also asking you questions and helping your brain get a workout and try to learn how to figure things out yourself.

And also, I think great teachers are somebody who's got—who have—are people who have confidence in you and have high expectations for you, and they see something in you

where they get a sense of, you know what, you're important, and you can do amazing things. And when you feel that from a teacher, that's—that a teacher really thinks you've got something in you that's worth saying or writing or—those are the teachers that you remember. Those are the teachers that inspire you.

What do you think, Arne?

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. I'll be quick. I think it's a really, really good answer. It's—the only thing I would add is, I think great teachers see things in students that they don't even see in themselves and pull things out of you. And someone like Russhaun, who talked publicly, mom was locked up—lots of folks could look at you and say, well, that's where he's going to go. Other teachers see him as a student body president, as a future teacher, as a future leader in the community. So those amazing teachers see things in us as kids. Those are the teachers I remember from my childhood, who saw things in me that I didn't even recognize in myself and helped to bring that to life.

The President. Great question. All right. I think it's a guy's turn now. Let's see. That gentleman right back there, right in the corner there.

2016 Presidential Election/Education Funding/Teachers

Q. Hi, my name is Dennis Nixon. I have a senior here at North High School. [*Laughter*] What's so funny?

The President. Are you the dad that's embarrassing——

Q. Maybe.

The President. Your daughter is just, like, "Oh, dad, God."

Q. Well, it's a give-and-take; they embarrass me, I'm going to embarrass them. [*Laughter*]

The President. Listen, I'm right there with you. So—[*laughter*].

Q. Okay. In your opinion, of all the next Presidential candidates that are in line, which ones have the best ideas for education reform to make it more affordable and accessible?

The President. Well, you know, I—[*laughter*]. Let me—I'm going to beg off this question a little bit. The—I promise you, I'm generally going to give you straight answers. On this one, I'm going to wiggle around a little bit. [*Laughter*] Right now I'm going to try to stay out of the campaign season until it—partly because I can't keep track of all the candidates. [*Laughter*] So I'll wait until it's winnowed down a little bit before I have an opinion.

But here's what I can say: that a society's values are reflected in where we put our time, our effort, our money. It is not sufficient for us to say we care about education if we aren't actually putting resources into education.

Now, I am—both Arne and I have gotten some guff sometimes from even within our own party because we've said that money alone is not enough; that it's important for us, if a school isn't teaching consistently kids so that they can achieve, then we've got to change how we do things, in collaboration with teachers and principals and parents and students. We've got to figure out, how do we make it work better?

So a lot of the initiatives we've had in terms of increased accountability and encouraging more creativity and empowering teachers more, those don't cost money. But what we also know is that if science labs don't have the right equipment, then it's harder to teach science. If kids don't have access to broadband and laptops in their classrooms, then they're at a disadvantage to those kids who do. If you've got a school that doesn't have enough counselors, and so, come time to apply for college, there aren't enough counselors to go around and kids aren't getting the best advice that they need, then they may end up selling themselves short in terms of their ability to go to college.

So resources do matter. And part of the reason I'm making this point—so that when you're evaluating candidates, you pay attention to this—is, we're going to be having a major debate in Congress coming up, because the budget is supposed to be done by the end of this month. And so far, Congress has not come up with a budget. And there are some in the other party who are comfortable with keeping in place something called sequester, which is going to be—is going to result in significant

cuts over the next several years in the amount of Federal support for education. And that's going to force then either layoffs or kids not getting the kinds of support that they need. It will have an effect on the education of students.

So I just want everybody to be clear, without endorsing any particular candidate's ideas, that if somebody is running for President and they say they're—they want to be the "education President," it means two things. One is that you care about every student doing well, not just some, because whoever is President is the President for all people, not just some people. That's point number one. And point number two is, is that you've got to be willing to provide the resources, particularly for communities that may not have as much of a property tax base so they can't always raise money on their own in order to help their students achieve.

All right? Anything you want to add on that?

Secretary Duncan. Just very quickly, again, without getting into this candidate or that, you've got about two dozen to choose from, and they all want your vote. Four questions I'd like you to ask every candidate, Republican, Democrat, conservative, liberal—it doesn't matter.

One, what are you willing to do to have more children have access to high-quality early childhood education? That's the best investment we can make. Two, what are you going to do to continue to increase our Nation's high school graduation rate? And we're very proud, it's at an alltime high, but it's nowhere near where it needs to be. Three, what are you going to do to make sure high school graduates are truly college and career ready and not having to take remedial classes in college, that they've been taught to high standards? And fourth, we need to lead the world in college graduation rates again. We were first a generation ago; today, we're 12th. Other countries have passed us by.

So, if every candidate you ask, what are your concrete goals for those four things, and then what resources—to the President's point—are you willing to put behind that, our country would be in a much stronger place.

The President. And not to be a tag team here, here's one last thing. Because—I'm sorry, what was your name? Angelica asked a terrific question about what does it mean to be a great teacher. If you hear a candidate say that the big problem with education is teachers, you should not vote for that person. Because I—it is a hard job. And it is the most important job we've got. And folks who go into teaching don't go into it for the money. [*Laughter*] They go into it because they are passionate about kids.

Now, that doesn't mean that there aren't some bad teachers, and it doesn't mean that we shouldn't hold teachers to high standards as well and continue to work in terms of professional development and recruitment and retention of great teachers. And there have been times where Arne and I have had some disagreements with the teachers' unions on certain issues because we want to encourage experimentation. And—but the bottom line, though, is, is that you can measure how good a school is by whether or not it is respecting and engaging teachers in the classroom so that they are professionals and they feel good about what they're doing and they are given freedom and they're not just being forced to teach to a test.

And it is very important for us, then, to make sure that, if what we hear is just a bunch of teacher-bashing—I can't tell you who to vote for, but—at least not right now. Later, I will. [*Laughter*] But I can tell you who to vote against, and that is somebody who decides that somehow teachers don't deserve the kind of respect that—and decent pay that they deserve.

So, all right. Let's see. It's a young lady's turn. Yes, you right there in the brown sweater right there. Okay, go ahead. That's fine.

College Affordability

Q. Thank you. I'm Elena Hicks, and I'm a senior at Roosevelt and an intern at the Hillary Clinton campaign. [*Applause*] Woo!

The President. Oh, okay. I guess I know who you're voting for. [*Laughter*]

Q. Yes. And this was a Sanders question, but I'll make it more general. Do you think it's possible or realistic for there to be free tuition for college in the United States?

The President. Well, I think that it is absolutely realistic for us to, first of all, have the first 2 years of community college free, because it's in my budget, and I know how to pay for it. [*Laughter*] And it would—and essentially, if you close up some corporate tax loopholes that aren't growing the economy and are just kind of a boondoggle, you take that money, you can then help every State do what Tennessee is already doing. Because Tennessee is already making community colleges free for the first 2 years.

And what that does, then, is, first of all, it helps young people who may not right now want to go get a 4-year college education, but know that they still need some sort of technical training, or they want to get an associate's degree. Right away, that whole group, they now know they can get their education for free as long as they're working hard. But for those who are thinking about a 4-year college education, they can also get their first 2 years at the community college, then transfer those credits to a 4-year college, and they've just cut their overall college costs in half. So it would be good for everybody, whether you're going 2 years or 4 years.

Now, if we can get that done, then I think we can start building from there. In the meantime, I do want to make sure, though, that everybody understands what we were talking about in terms of FAFSA. You have to fill out this form. And we are making it easier for you to do. You have no excuse. Parents who are here, even if you didn't go to college, you need to nag your kids to make sure that this FAFSA form gets filled out so that people know—so that you know the student aid that you may be entitled to.

My grandma, she didn't go to college, she didn't—even though she was probably the smartest person I knew. But she did know that you had to go to college and that you had to fill out this form. So I want everybody here to make sure that you stay focused on that, because there's more help already than a lot of people are aware of. And this College Scorecard that we talked about—collegescorecard.ed.gov—what that does is, is it allows you to take a look at the schools to find out, do they graduate their students, how much debt do they have, are they generally getting a job after they graduate?

So we're not, like, just ranking, here's the most prestigious school; what we're—we're giving you some news you can use here in evaluating whether the schools that you're applying to actually deliver on their commitment. Because a lot of times, the students who get big student loans debt after they graduate, it's because they didn't think through where they should go, what should they be studying, what resources are available. And we want you to, on the front end, to have as much information as possible in order to make a good choice. Okay? All right.

Arne, anything to add on that?

Secretary Duncan. Very, very quickly, quick test. That FAFSA form the President talked about, how much in grants and loans do we give out each year? Any guesses, at the Federal level?

Audience member. A lot.

Secretary Duncan. How much is a lot?

The President. See, I didn't test you. [*Laughter*] You notice this. That's the head of the Education Department.

Secretary Duncan. How much? 30,000? Any other thoughts? Yes, sir. What's that? Total, how much? $30 billion? Any other guesses? All right, so very quickly, we give out $150 billion in grants and loans each year.

The President. That's real money. [*Laughter*]

Secretary Duncan. And the President said we've got a long way to go, we want to do more, trying to make community colleges free. But we don't care whether your family has money or don't have money or whether your family has gone to college or not or where you live. If you work hard—$150 billion. It's the only form—20 minutes, half an hour—the only form you're ever going to fill out in your life that's going to give you access to $150 billion.

So I just want to emphasize this point. You have to fill that out.

The President. Got to fill it out. [*Laughter*] All right? A'ight. [*Laughter*] This gentleman back here. I don't want to neglect the folks in the back here.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Q. How are you doing, Mr. President?

The President. How are you, sir?

Q. Good, good. My name is Rudolph Dawson, and I'm a graduate of Fort Valley State University in Georgia. My concern is that the Historically Black schools like Fort Valley State, a lot of the pressure is being put on them in terms of they're not getting the budget they need to continue to educate people like myself. They are not getting the programs that they need to attract students that want the higher pay. And it's to me—what can you do, or what can your administration do, or the next administration do, to right the wrong that's done in the past? And it's continued to be done to these universities. This—Fort Valley State is also a land-grant college, and they haven't been getting all the money they needed for agriculture like the University of Georgia. I'd like to see some changes there.

The President. Okay. The—well, first of all, for those of you—because some of you—we've got a lot of young people here, so just to give you a little bit of history, the Historically Black Colleges and Universities arose at a time when obviously a lot of schools were segregated. And so African American students couldn't attend a lot of the traditional State colleges and universities that had been set up.

And many of them went on to become incredible educational institutions that produced some of our greatest thinkers. So Morehouse College, Howard, Spelman—all across the country, particularly in the South, a lot of these Historically Black Colleges and Universities were really the nurturer of an African American middle class, many of whom then went on to become the civil rights pioneers that helped to lead to Dr. King and to the civil rights movement and to all the history that I think you're aware of.

A lot of those schools are still doing well. Some of them have gotten smaller and are struggling, partly because of good news—University of Georgia isn't segregated anymore, for example—so it's good that African American students or Latino students have more diverse options. But they still service an important role. And so working with people like Congressman Bobby Scott and others, we've continued to provide some support to those schools.

But one thing that Arne and I have been doing is saying to these Historically Black Colleges and Universities, you've also got to step up your game in terms of graduation rates, because there are some of those schools, just like non-Historically Black Colleges and Universities, who take in a lot of students, but don't always graduate those students. And those students end up being stuck with debt, and it's not a good deal for them.

So we're working together. We've got a whole Task Force and Commission that's just devoted to working with these schools to make sure that they've got the resources they need to continue to perform a really important function, but that they're also stepping up their game so that kids who attend these universities and colleges, they're graduating on time and are able to then pursue the kind of careers that they need.

Anything you want to add on that? All right.

Let's see. It's a—I think it's a young lady's turn now. Oh, you know what, I need to go up top. All right. That young lady in the striped shirt right there. I can barely see, but this is what happens when you get older, young people. [*Laughter*] First time I came to Iowa, I had no gray hair. [*Laughter*] I didn't. Look at me now. [*Laughter*]

Diversity of Viewpoints on College Campuses

Q. Hi, my name is Abba. I'm currently a junior at Lincoln High School here on the South Side of Des Moines. My question to you is, I know you don't want to get involved with the Presidential race at the moment, but a candidate has said that they want to cut Government spending—or to politically biased colleges, and

I was wondering if, say, that would hurt the education system for those who depend on that, or would it better the education as a whole?

The President. I—first of all, I didn't hear this candidate say that. I have no idea what that means. [*Laughter*] I suspect he doesn't either. [*Laughter*]

Look, the purpose of college is not just, as I said before, to transmit skills. It's also to widen your horizons, to make you a better citizen, to help you to evaluate information, to help you make your way through the world, to help you be more creative. The way to do that is to create a space where a lot of ideas are presented and collide and people are having arguments and people are testing each other's theories, and over time, people learn from each other, because they're getting out of their own narrow point of view and having a broader point of view.

So Arne, I'm sure, has the same experience that I did, which is, when I went to college, suddenly, there were some folks who didn't think at all like me. And if I had an opinion about something, they'd look at me and say, well, that's stupid. And then, they'd describe how they saw the world. And they might have had different sets of politics, or they might have a different view about poverty, or they might have a different perspective on race, and sometimes, their views would be infuriating to me. But it was because there was this space where you could interact with people who didn't agree with you and had different backgrounds than you that I then started testing my own assumptions. And sometimes, I changed my mind. Sometimes, I realized, you know what, maybe I've been too narrow-minded. Maybe I didn't take this into account. Maybe I should see this person's perspective.

So that's what college, in part, is all about. The idea that you'd have somebody in Government making a decision about what you should think ahead of time or what you should be taught and if it's not the right thought or idea or perspective or philosophy, that that person would be—that they wouldn't get funding runs contrary to everything we believe about education. I mean, I guess that might work in the Soviet Union—[*laughter*]—but it doesn't work here. That's not who we are. That's not what we're about.

Now, one thing I do want to point out is, it's not just sometimes folks who are mad that colleges are too liberal that have a problem. Sometimes, there are folks on college campuses who are liberal and maybe even agree with me on a bunch of issues who sometimes aren't listening to the other side. And that's a problem too.

I was just talking to a friend of mine about this. I've heard of some college campuses where they don't want to have a guest speaker who is too conservative. Or they don't want to read a book if it has language that is offensive to African Americans or somehow sends a demeaning signal towards women. And I've got to tell you, I don't agree with that either. I don't agree that you, when you become students at colleges, have to be coddled and protected from different points of view.

I think that you should be able to—you should invite—anybody should—anybody who comes to speak to you and you disagree with, you should have an argument with them. But you shouldn't silence them by saying, you can't come because my—I'm too sensitive to hear what you have to say. That's not the way we learn either.

So what do you think, Arne?

Secretary Duncan. Amen.

The President. He said, amen. [*Laughter*] All right. Okay.

Let's see. I think it's a guy's turn. This gentleman with—this gentleman here in the tie, you had your hand up a couple times. Yes, I didn't want you to feel neglected. You got—you almost gave up, and I wanted to make sure to call on you. Hold on a second. Wait for the mike.

Tax Deductions for Student Loans/Education Funding/Federal Budget

Q. Thank you. My name is James Quinn. This is my wife Tatiana and our daughter Victoria. We've been saving for her college education for 10 years, and over that time, the Federal deductibility of 529 contributions has gone

away, even though we can still get that deduction from Iowa income taxes. It would be nice to see a little reward for saving, rather than just making borrowing money get easier.

The President. The—I'm going to let Arne hit this one because he's an expert on our various savings programs.

Secretary Duncan. Yes. I'll just say, as a parent with two kids not quite this age, my wife and I are putting money actively into 529s to try and save. And getting the Federal Government to support that more or encourage that would be fantastic. And again, this is something we have to work with the Congress to do the right thing.

But for families who are saving, we have some families now starting kindergarten and first grade, saving every year, just a little bit, to help their kids to go to college. We need to incentivize that and reward that. It's a great point.

The President. There was a time when the deductibility with student loans was more significant than it is today. Whenever you make something tax-deductible, that means that there's less money going into the Treasury. That, then, means that either somebody has got to pay for it with other taxes or the deficit grows or we spend less on something else.

And this is part of why this argument, this debate that's going on right now in Congress about lifting the sequester is so important. It's a—I—it's a Washington term—I hate the term—but essentially, what Congress did was it said, all right, we're just going to lop off spending at this level for the next decade. The problem is, of course, the population is going up, the economy is growing, and so even though the deficit right now has been cut by two-thirds since I came into office, which is—that's—you wouldn't know that listening to some of the candidates around here, but it has.

If in fact sequester stays in place, not only our ability to spend for education or to help families with student loans, but also things like early childhood education, Head Start programs, Pell grants—all those things can end up being adversely affected.

And this is one thing that I would just ask everybody to consider. When you hear budget debates, I know your eyes kind of glaze over, but the Federal budget, that's really where we express our values. And a lot of times people say, well, we should just cut Government spending because there's all this waste. But in fact, the vast majority of Government spending is for Social Security, it's for Medicare, it's for Medicaid, it's for helping vulnerable populations, and it's for defense. And not a lot is left over for helping middle class families, for example, send their kids to college or to save.

And if you have this ceiling, this artificial cap, without take into account a growing population and more young people going to college, then you end up with a situation in which fewer people are getting help. And that's why it's important for us to lift this artificial cap. And it's also why it's important for us to close some of these tax loopholes that are going to either the very wealthy or to corporations that really don't need them, because they're doing just fine, and they're not having a problem financing their college educations—their kids' college educations.

All right. It's a young lady's turn. All right. I will go—I'm going to go to this young lady because originally I called on her first, and then—but I—we got mixed up. So I didn't—go ahead. What's your name?

College Application Process/Higher Education

Q. That's all right. My name is Nosa Ali, and I go to Roosevelt High School. Hopefully, my question is not too difficult. And it's what is your best advice for Malia as she goes off to college?

The President. My best advice to Malia. Now, this is assuming that Malia would listen to my advice. [*Laughter*] She's very much like her mother at this point. [*Laughter*] She's got her own mind.

One piece of advice that I've given her is not to stress too much about having to get into one particular college. There are a lot of good colleges and universities out there, and it's important, I think, for everybody here to understand you can find a college or university that does—gives you a great education, and just because

it's not some name-brand, famous, fancy school doesn't mean that you're not going to get a great education there. So one is, lower the stress levels in terms of just having to get into one particular school. I think that's important.

The second piece of advice I have is keep your grades up until you get in, and after that, make sure you pass. [*Laughter*] Because it's important that you kind of run through the tape in your senior year and not start feeling a little slack. I don't worry about that with her; she's a hard worker.

And then, the third thing is really the advice that I already mentioned, which is, be open to new experiences when you go to college. I—don't go to college just to duplicate the same experience you had in high school. Don't make your decision based on, well, where are all my friends going so that I can do the exact same things with the exact same friends that I did in high school. The whole point is for you to push yourself out of your comfort level, meet people you haven't met before, take classes that you hadn't thought of before. Stretch yourself. Because this is the time to do it, when you're young. Seek out new experiences.

Because I think when you do that, you may discover you may think that you wanted to do one thing; it may turn out, you wanted to do—that you wanted to do something completely different, and you have an amazing talent for something completely different, but you just haven't been exposed to it yet. You've got to know what it is that's out there, and that requires you to do some things differently than you've been doing in high school.

So, Arne, anything you wanted to add on that?

Secretary Duncan. Just quickly, particularly for the seniors, please don't apply to one school—sort of what the President said—apply to four, five, six, seven schools. It's amazing to me how many young people just apply to one school. And it might be the best fit for you, but keep your options open. So look at what's out there—close to home, less close to home, whatever it might be—apply to a bunch of places.

And a final thing, just to emphasize, the goal is not to go to college; the goal is to graduate. And so figure out where you're going to go and graduate. And it might take you 3 years, it might take you 4, it might take you 5. But the big thing we need all of you not to just go, not to attend, but to walk across those stages 4 or 5 years from now with that diploma in hand.

The President. Gentleman right here. Here, you can use my mike.

Diversity in Education

Q. All right. [*Laughter*] Thanks, Mr. President. I'm an elementary school principal here in Des Moines Public Schools, and one of the things that we really value is the diversity that we have within our community. And I'm really curious to hear from you and Secretary Duncan the value that you see that diversity brings to a young person's education.

The President. That's a great question. How long have you been—how long you been a principal?

Q. Five years.

The President. Five years?

Q. Five years.

The President. That's outstanding. The—we're getting old, though, man, because I thought he was a student. [*Laughter*] He's the principal. He's not even just a teacher, he's a principal. [*Laughter*] The—well, thank you for the great work you're doing.

To some degree, I've already answered this question. The value of diversity is getting to know and understand people who are different from you, because that's the world you will be living in and working in. And it's actually really interesting, they've been showing through a variety of studies that people who can understand and connect with a wide range of people, that that ends up being as important a skill, if not more important a skill, than just about anything else in terms of your career success, whatever the field.

It also, by the way, is part of what makes our democracy work. I was having a discussion about this earlier today. Our democracy is premised on an assumption that even if somebody is not just like me, that they're a good person

and a generous person and that we have things in common and that we can work things out and if we have a disagreement, then we can have an argument based on facts and evidence. And I might sometimes lose the argument, and I don't persuade as many people, and then, that's how voting works, and majorities are formed, and they change. That's how our democracy is supposed to work.

And I think that starts early. Because when you've got diversity in schools, then you're less likely as an adult to start thinking, well, that person, they're not like me, or those persons, they don't have the same values, or they don't care as much about their kids, or—and then democracy starts breaking down, because then everything is a fight to the death because there's no sense that we can actually bridge our differences and disagree without being disagreeable and find common ground.

So it's not only good for your career, but it's also good for our country. The same goes—the same holds true, by the way, as part of diversity—studies show that organizations that have women in decisionmaking positions function better than those who don't. And so—[*applause*]—seriously, the—that if you look at corporate boards, actually you can correlate their performance with the number of women that they've got on those boards. So it also is valuable for us to make sure that not only is there diversity, but that in leadership positions, different voices are heard.

So, Arne, anything you want to add to that?

Good. So keep it up. [*Laughter*]

Young lady right there. Yes, you. Right there. Well, oh, I'm sorry, but I'll call on you first, and then I'll get back to you. I'm sorry. The mike is already there. I promise you'll be the next.

Arts Education

Q. Right here? Hello. Okay. It works. [*Laughter*] Hi. My name is Ja Dicela. I'm a junior here at North High School. And actually, I have, like, two questions. One is one for my friend. He's very shy; he can't speak up.

The President. [*Laughter*]

Q. We are part of a group called Upward Bound, and we work through Simpson College.

The President. Yes.

Q. There's been stories of our budget being cut, and we want to know what the Government can—help us and work with us for that.

And my other question is, in your professional opinion, how much is visual arts an importance to our school, and how are you going to save it?

The President. Okay. Why don't I—I'll take the first—I'll take the question on visual arts, you talk about Upward Bound. The—Arne, go ahead.

Secretary Duncan. Just very quickly, it really goes back to what the President talked about. It's not just Upward Bound that's at risk; it's Pell grants that are at risk, early childhood education. Folks in Congress want to zero that out of the budget. And I think it's so important that all of us as students and as educators to not pit this program against the other, but to hold folks in Washington accountable for investing in education.

As the President said, we want to make sure we're getting results. It's not blindly investing. But there are lots of things in our budget, Upward Bound being a piece of it, that honestly are in pretty significant danger right now. And the President is fighting very hard. We have some folks backing us, but there are others that just sort of see these things as somehow extras. And I think it's so important that as young people, as voters, as family, your voices be heard.

He cannot by himself prevent these cuts. That's not how our democracy works. And so we'll do—we'll hold us accountable. We'll continue to push very, very hard. That's why we're out traveling the country all the time. But we need voters' voices being heard, saying, we need Upward Bound programs, we need TRIO, we need early childhood, we need afterschool programs, we need the arts. And you can talk about the arts as well.

The President. Well, look, the—I mean, the arts are what make life worthwhile, right? It's—you need food and shelter and all that good stuff, but the things that make you laugh,

cry, connect, love, so much of that is communicated through the arts.

And I don't want our young people to think that the arts are just something that you sit there passively and watch on a TV screen. I want everybody, even if you're not a great artist, to have the experience of making art and have the experience of making music. Because that's part of what makes for a well-rounded education.

We also know that young people learn better if they're not just looking at a textbook and multiple-test quizzes all day long and that it breaks up the monotony and it gives expression to different sides of themselves, that that's good for the overall educational experience.

So I think visual arts, music, it's all important. And we should not be depriving young people of those experiences. And they're not extras. They're central to who we are. The—we are—part of what makes us human is our ability to make art, to represent what's inside of us in ways that surprise and delight people. And I don't want us to start thinking that that's somehow something we can just push aside.

Now, I want you to be able to read and be able to do your algebra too. But I don't know why it—where we got this idea we've got to choose between those two things. We've got to be able to do them all. And it used to be standard practice. And there was no debate, even in the smallest town in a poorer community or a rural community. There was always the art teacher and the math teacher—or the art teacher and the music teacher, and nobody assumed somehow that that was an extra. That was part of it, just like having a sports program was part of it. And that's part of what a well-rounded education is all about.

But it does cost some money. And that's something that I want to emphasize: that you can't do all this stuff on the cheap all the time.

So how many more questions? How much more time we got? Only one? I'm going to take two. [*Laughter*] The—all right. I'm going to get to you—don't worry—because I promised I was going to—I'll tell you, it's a guy's turn. This guy right there. All right.

Q. All right. Okay. [*Laughter*] I've got two short questions.

The President. What's your name?

Education Reform

Q. My name is Marcus Carter, and I'm a senior. And out of all the schools in Iowa, why did you come here? And after this, can I get a picture with you? [*Laughter*]

The President. Now, Marcus, I'm going to answer your first question. Second question, though, if I start taking a picture with you—look at this crowd right here. [*Laughter*] I'd—we'd be taking a lot of selfies. So I'm imposing the no-selfie rule, although I'll definitely try to shake as many hands as possible.

We came here because some really good work is being done here. And I think that your teachers, your principal, the superintendent deserve credit for the improvements that have been made. And I want Arne to address this, because Arne travels to schools all across the country. And sometimes, we get so focused on what's not working that we forget to lift up what is working. And when a school is doing a good job, I'm sure the principal and superintendent—the teachers here feel like they want to do even more and do even better. And—but when we've made progress, we've got to acknowledge that, because that makes us feel encouraged and hopeful that we can continue to make even more strides.

So, Arne.

Secretary Duncan. I'll just say a couple quick things. And it's not a coincidence that we're here, but this is a school that historically struggled, had some hard times. And new leadership, new expectations—the President talked about technology here, talked a much better sense of culture, different ways of discipline. But the thing I always go back to is—I don't know if my numbers are exact—I think a couple years ago you had 2 AP classes, and now you have 15. And to go from 2 to 15 is a really big deal.

But what I always say is the students here aren't seven times as smart as 4 years ago; it's just higher expectations, a different sense of belief among adults about what's possible. And

so we try and highlight places that haven't always been successful but are trying to do the right thing and move in the right direction.

As the President said, no one is satisfied. You guys are still hungry, you're still trying to get better. But that's real progress. That's adults saying, kids, students, young people deserve the opportunity to take college classes in high school, deserve to go to a safe school, deserve the technology. I think there are lots of lessons other schools could learn from the progress you're making here at North High School.

The President. All right. I promised I was going to call on this young lady last. Go ahead.

Q. Okay.

The President. What's your name?

Federal Student Loan Programs/Immigration Reform

Q. Okay. My name is Tania Montoya from North High School. And my question is, if you legalize college—or free 2-year college, is everyone, including illegal students with a good GPA, able to get this benefit?

The President. Well, the—right now the way—no, this is an important question, and I know this is a debate that's been taking place among some of the Presidential candidates. Right now the way that the Federal student loan programs work is that undocumented students are not eligible for these loan programs. That's how the law is currently. And it is my view—well, two things I want to say.

First, if you fall in that category, you should still fill out the FAFSA, because it may be that States or universities or colleges may have private scholarships or other mechanisms. So it doesn't automatically mean that you may not qualify for some benefits. So it's still important for you to kind of—because that's a standard form that's used by everybody.

But this raises the broader question that I've been talking about now for a couple of years, and that is that for young people who came here, their parents may have brought them here and they now are Americans, kids by every other criteria except for a piece of paper—they may be your classmates, they may be your friends, they may be your neighbors—the notion that somehow we would not welcome their desire to be full-fledged parts of this community and this country and to contribute and to serve makes absolutely no sense.

And this whole anti-immigrant sentiment that's out there in our politics right now is contrary to who we are. The—because unless you are a Native American, your family came from someplace else. And although we are a nation of laws and we want people to follow the law, and we have been working—and I've been pushing Congress—to make sure that we have strong borders and we are keeping everybody moving through legal processes, don't pretend that somehow a hundred years ago the immigration process was all smooth and strict and—[*laughter*]—that's not how it worked.

There are a whole bunch of folks who came here from all over Europe and all throughout Asia and all throughout Central America and all—and certainly who came from Africa, who it wasn't some orderly process that—where all the rules applied and everything was strict, and I came the right way. That's not how it worked.

So the notion that now, suddenly, that one generation or two generations, or even four or five generations removed, that suddenly we are treating new immigrants as if they're the problem, when your grandparents were treated like the problem or your great-grandparents were treated like the problem or were considered somehow unworthy or uneducated or unwashed—no. That's not who we are. It's not who we are.

We can have a legitimate debate about how to set up an immigration system that is fair and orderly and lawful. And I think the people who came here illegally should have the consequences of paying a fine and getting registered and all kinds of steps that they should have to take in order to get right with the law. But when I hear folks talking as if somehow these kids are different from my kids or less worthy in the eyes of God, that somehow they are less worthy of our respect and consideration and care, I think that's un-American. I do not believe that. I think it is wrong. And I think we

should do better. Because that's how America was made, by us caring about all our kids.

Thank you, everybody. I love you guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:06 p.m. in the auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Russhaun Johnson, student body president, Chad Ryan, basketball coach, and Kimber L. Foshe, counselor, North High School; and 2016 Republican Presidential candidate Benjamin S. Carson, Sr. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng. Secretary Duncan referred to Rashawn Lovejoy, mother of Russhaun Johnson. He also referred to his wife Karen Duncan and their children Ryan and Claire. A participant referred to former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Sen. Bernard Sanders, in their capacity as 2016 Democratic Presidential candidates.

Remarks Honoring the NCAA Women's Basketball Champion University of Connecticut Huskies

September 15, 2015

Everybody, have a seat. Welcome to the White House. And welcome back to the—surprisingly enough—NCAA Champions, the UConn Huskies! We have some rabid Members of Congress here today. And not only do we have the—some of the current delegation, but we also have Connecticut's own former Senator Chris Dodd here.

We have the chairman of the University of Connecticut's Board of Trustees, Larry McHugh is here. Give him a big round of applause. The Huskies' athletic director, Warde Manuel, who is having a pretty good run, it appears. And a frequent visitor and friend to the White House, Coach Geno Auriemma.

As some of you may be aware, this is Coach's 10th championship. This is this team's third visit in a row. They are now certified to provide White House tours. [*Laughter*] I was telling folks, this is becoming like the annual Christmas tree lighting. [*Laughter*] We do this every year around this time.

Now, last season began with something unusual for these Huskies, which was a loss. In their second game, Stanford needed overtime to snap UConn's 47-game winning streak. For this team, it was just a wakeup call. There was, as Associate Head Coach Chris Dailey would say, no dilly and no dally. [*Laughter*]

So Breanna Stewart, the National Player of the Year 2 years in a row—she has game—[*laughter*]—she reminded everybody how hard this team works to be the best. She said: "We make it look easier than it is, but it comes with a lot of hard work. We don't just step on the court and get the trophy. We have to get better. Each year, it seems there is someone else trying to test us and push us to our breaking point."

So Breanna may have been Player of the Year, but she was far from alone. This group of young women understand the concept of team. And this team was loaded. Kia Nurse. Morgan Tuck. Kaleena Mosqueda-Lewis, who I will not challenge in a H-O-R-S-E game. [*Laughter*] The Huskies' point guard in the past two championships, Moriah Jefferson, who's got speed. After they won this last championship game, Moriah said: "I think this one for me is by far the most exciting. It's definitely one of the ones that means the most because we had to fight so hard."

And so now, here they are. And like my daughters, they apparently like Beyoncé, and they are now running the world.

That competitive spirit extends to their marathon Uno tournaments in the locker room. Kiah Stokes, one of the hardest working players on and off the court, is the reigning locker room Uno champion. Raise—[*laughter*]. Go ahead and—she's proud of that. They're also academic all-stars. These women won an award for achieving the highest GPA of any women's basketball team in their conference, and half the team made the Dean's List. So that deserves a big round of applause.

[*Applause*] Way to go. I do—you know, when I see the men's teams, generally I say, you know, have you paid attention to the women's teams? [*Laughter*] And they go, yes. [*Laughter*]

Over the past 4 years, every Husky who has completed their 4 years of eligibility at UConn has graduated. And that's something worth celebrating.

These women are also all-stars in their communities. They run Thanksgiving and winter food drives. They help stock shelves at local food banks. They put on a Christmas party for children with terminal illnesses. They spend their afternoon with senior citizens. They host basketball clinics and bike drives for kids in downtown Hartford.

So they are outstanding basketball players, more importantly, outstanding citizens, outstanding role models for our kids and not just for our girls, but also for our boys. They are fun to be with, I've gotten used to it. [*Laughter*] And I couldn't be prouder of them.

And I always say this, but it bears repeating: When I've got two daughters who are tall and gorgeous and athletic, for them to know that they've got a whole bunch of people ahead of them who are doing great stuff, it empowers them, and it makes me feel very proud to be with these outstanding young women.

So congratulations to all the Huskies. I don't want to jinx it: No team has ever won four in a row. [*Laughter*] I'm just saying. [*Laughter*] You get here one more time, we might have to name the White House Basketball Court after you, or at least, you can guide the tour. [*Laughter*]

So, with that, let me have Coach Auriemma say a few words. And as I said before, no bunny ears this time. [*Laughter*] All right.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:07 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Breanna Stewart, Morgan Tuck, and Kaleena Mosqueda-Lewis, forwards, Kia Nurse, guard, and Kiah Stokes, center, University of Connecticut women's basketball team; and musician Beyoncé G. Knowles-Carter.

Remarks Following a Meeting With King Felipe VI of Spain
September 15, 2015

President Obama. Well, it is a wonderful honor and pleasure to welcome His Majesty King Felipe to the Oval Office. We've had occasion to meet before, but this is the first time that he has visited while I've been in office in an official capacity. So welcome, Your Majesty.

His Majesty is here in part to celebrate in St. Augustine, Florida, the oldest Spanish settlement here in the hemisphere, 450 years, which in Europe is a very brief time, but here in the United States, that's a very long time.

So that visit is a reminder of the long history and bonds between our two peoples. At the same time, we want to wish on behalf of the American people, a happy birthday to Her Majesty the Queen. She is currently being hosted by Michelle. And given the Queen's outstanding work on issues like hunger and malnutrition, she and Michelle, I'm sure, have a lot to talk about.

His Majesty and I have had an excellent conversation in which we reaffirmed what both the Spanish people and the American people understand, which is, we have an outstanding, long-lasting friendship and alliance that is important not only to our two countries, but also to the NATO alliance and also to the world.

I emphasized to His Majesty our great appreciation for the security agreements and bilateral ties, the fact that Spain is a host for so many Americans who every single day are working to keep us safe and working together, side by side with Spanish armed servicemembers, to provide the collective security that's so important to us all.

I expressed appreciation for the work we're doing side by side in training Afghan security forces and pushing back against ISIL and other extremists in the Middle East; the counterterrorism efforts that we engage in together, including strong cooperation with our intelli-

gence services; and the peacekeeping efforts that Spain engages in in places like Lebanon that are not only important to our security, but also are important in keeping people safe and providing humanitarian assistance.

We also had the opportunity to discuss the migration crisis that's taking place currently in Europe. And Spain has worked hard to deal with this issue in the past with North African migrants that oftentimes are engaged in very dangerous travels and human trafficking that takes place. Obviously, that's gotten worse over the last several months.

And we agreed that this is going to require cooperation with all the European countries and the United States and the international community in order to ensure that people are safe, that they are treated with shared humanity, and that we ultimately have to deal with the source of the problem, which is the ongoing crisis in Syria. And we discussed how we can continue to strengthen that cooperation. And I discussed the fact that the United States feels it is important for us to also take our share of Syrian refugees as part of this overall humanitarian effort.

We discussed economic cooperation. I congratulated Spain on the progress that it's made in recovering from a brutal recession, but recognized that more work needs to be done on both sides of the Atlantic to improve opportunity and prosperity for our people. And whether it's working together on trade agreements or entrepreneurship that encourage greater formation of small and medium-sized businesses that can create jobs and opportunity, we are coordinating closely with the Spanish Government to ensure that we continue to deepen the economic cooperation that already exists.

And let me just say in conclusion that in the past, the Spanish people have hosted my family. I hope that I can travel to Spain before the end of my Presidency. There's no country that I enjoy more for a visit. And I think that sentiment is shared by the American people. We feel a great affinity and a great friendship with the Spanish people.

And as a matter of foreign policy, we are deeply committed to maintaining a relationship with a strong and unified Spain. We think that Spain's presence is important not only to Europe, but also to the United States and also to the world. And the leadership that His Majesty has shown during his first year in the throne, I think, has been an outstanding example for all of us.

So we are very grateful for his visit and hope that he has a wonderful trip down to Florida.

King Felipe. Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to say a few words in English and then also in Spanish if that's okay with all of you gentlemen, ladies.

First of all, I would like to thank President Obama for this opportunity to come and visit, to be here at the White House in this first official visit I do as King of Spain, as head of state, to the United States.

There's a long history of our relationships. There's a long history about the links of Spain to this great country. And all of that comes to term in this, is present in this visit.

I follow in the footsteps of my father. He's had a longstanding relationship with many Presidents of the United States. And also, my presence here brings to mind memories of my time in Washington as a student. I spent 2 years here in Georgetown University, my alma mater. And now being here as a head of state and visiting the White House brings a lot of emotion to this opportunity.

And I want to thank the President, as well, for this opportunity to reflect and to mention all those issues that bind us closely together and comes to—brings us together into our commitments to continue the flourishing of our bilateral relations and also our shared efforts in the international community and to address all those global issues that are pressing so strongly.

When we talk about history, of course, this visit is being held at a moment where we're celebrating 450 years, as you mentioned, of the city of St. Augustine, the first European permanent settlement in the U.S. And we will be visiting both Miami and St. Augustine. There's a lot of history that we'll be remembering.

When I went this morning to visit Mount Vernon, I wanted to start off this visit with that

emotional touch, honoring and respecting the first U.S. President, George Washington, and also reflecting upon the history that binds us together with the birth of this Nation in the—in your strife for independence in which Bernardo de Galvez, as you know, had a very important participation.

He has gained for his own merit the honor of being considered honorary citizens of the United States. Not too many people have accomplished that. And we're happy to see his portrait on the Foreign Relations Senate Committee closely to Friar Junípero Serra's statue, another Spaniard that has taken a very strong role in the history of this country and is soon going to be canonized by Pope Francis in his visit in coming days.

I would like to share what I expressed to the President in terms of admiration and respect to this great nation. We have respect as allies, as friends. We appreciate the ongoing relationships of all our governments. And because we share many values—share values of greater liberty, of unity, of democracy, and obviously, also human rights and respect for diversity—and admiration because of the success throughout history that the American people have come to build this great nation and to perform a role, not a difficult—not an easy role in the world, and always striving to help other nations find their way to democracy and to stability and to peace.

I would like to say a few words in Spanish, if you will.

[*At this point, King Felipe spoke in Spanish, and no transcript was provided. He then continued in English as follows.*]

Mr. President, I would like to stress the fact that we would very much enjoy and appreciate to see you in Spain if it's possible before you finish your term. We would very gladly welcome that opportunity. But anyhow, later on.

President Obama. Well, I'll come a lot, Your Majesty, after I'm President. That's easy. [*Laughter*]

King Felipe. Well, we'd welcome you with open arms. And thank you again for this opportunity and for your friendship.

President Obama. Thank you, so much. Appreciate it. Thank you. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:50 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Queen Letizia of Spain. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. King Felipe referred to King Juan Carlos I of Spain.

Remarks to the Business Roundtable and a Question-and-Answer Session
September 16, 2015

The President. Thank you, Randall, and thank you to everybody here at the Business Roundtable for having me today. I'm just going to say a few words and then, hopefully, spend a lot of time taking your questions.

Seven years ago today was one of the worst days in the history of our economy. If you picked up the Wall Street Journal that morning, you read that the shocks from AIG and Lehman were spreading worldwide. The day before, stocks had suffered their worst loss since 9/11. In the months after, businesses would go bankrupt, millions of Americans would lose their jobs and their homes, and our economy would reach the brink of collapse.

That's where we were when I became Chief Executive. Here's where we are today: Businesses like yours have created more than 13 million new jobs over the past 66 months, the longest streak of job growth on record. The unemployment rate is lower than it's been in over 7 years. There are more job openings right now than at any time in our history. Housing has bounced back. Household wealth is higher than it was before the recession. We have made enormous strides in both traditional energy sources and clean energy sources while reducing our carbon emissions. And our education system is actually making significant progress with significant gains in reducing the

dropout rate, reading scores increasing, math scores increasing. And by the way, more than 16 million people have health insurance that didn't have it before.

So this progress is a testament to American business and innovation. It's a testament to the workers that you employ. But I'm going to take a little credit too. [*Laughter*] It's a testament to some good policy decisions. Soon after we took office, we passed the Recovery Act, rescued our auto industry, worked to rebuild our economy on a stronger foundation for growth. Other countries in some cases embraced austerity as an ideology without looking at the data and the facts, tried to cut their way out of recession. The results speak for themselves. America has come back from crisis faster than almost every other advanced nation on Earth. And at a time of significant global volatility, we remain the world's safest, smartest investment.

Of course, I will not be satisfied—and we as a country shouldn't be satisfied—until more working families are feeling the recovery in their own lives. But the fact is that what I've called middle class economics has been good for business. Corporate profits have hit an all-time high. Slowing health care prices and plummeting energy costs have helped your bottom lines. Manufacturing is growing at the fastest clip in about two decades. Our workforce is more educated than ever before. The stock market has more than doubled since 2009, and 2015 is on pace to be the year with the highest consumer confidence since 2004. And America's technological entrepreneurs have continued to make incredible products that are changing our lives rapidly.

Now, you wouldn't know any of this if you were listening to the folks who are seeking this office that I occupy. [*Laughter*] In the echo chamber that is Presidential politics, everything is dark, and everything is terrible. They don't seem to offer many solutions for the disasters that they perceive, but they're quick to tell you who to blame. I'm here to say that there's nothing particularly patriotic or American about talking down America, especially when we stand as one of the few sources of economic strength in the world.

Right now we've got the chance to build on progress that we have made and that is acknowledged worldwide. We have a chance to grow the economy even faster, create jobs even faster, lift people's incomes and prospects even faster. We just have to make some sensible choices. And I'm going to focus on one particular example. America's next fiscal year is almost upon us, which means that Congress has about 2 weeks to pass a budget. If they don't, they will shut down America's Government for the second time in 2 years.

Democrats are ready to sit down and negotiate with Republicans right now, today, as we speak. But it should be over legitimate questions of spending and revenue, not unrelated ideological issues. You'll recall that 2 years ago Republicans shut down the Government because they didn't like Obamacare. Today, some are suggesting the Government should be shut down because they don't like Planned Parenthood. That's not good sense, and it's not good business. The notion that we'd play chicken with a $18 trillion economy and global markets that are already skittish all because of an issue around a women's health provider that receives less than 20 cents out of every thousand dollars in the Federal budget, that's not good policymaking.

Now, the last time Republicans shut down the Government, it cost our economy billions of dollars; consumer confidence plummeted. I don't think anybody here thinks that's going to be good for your business.

I've always believed what our first Republican President, a guy from my home State named Abraham Lincoln, believed: that through Government we should do together those things that we can't do as well by ourselves. Funding infrastructure projects. Educating the best workforce in the world. Investing in cutting-edge research and development so that businesses can take that research and take some risks to create new products and new services. Setting basic rules for the marketplace that encourage innovation and fair competition that help a market-based economy thrive. Creating a safety net that not only helps the most vulnerable on our—in our society,

but also frees all of us to take risks and protect against life's uncertainties. And welcoming, rather than disparaging, the striving immigrants that have always been the source of continued renewal, economic vibrancy, and dynamism in our economy.

So my hope is that Congress aims a little higher than just not shutting the Government down. That's a good start, we'd like them to achieve that, but I think we can do better. We can actually do some things to help the economy grow. After the last shutdown, both parties came together and unwound some of the irrational cuts to our economy and military readiness that's known as sequester. That agreement expires in 2 weeks as well. And for those of you who are not steeped in Federal budget terminology, sequester basically are automatic top-line cuts that don't discriminate, don't think through what are good investments and what is waste. And if we don't reverse the cuts that are currently in place, a lot of the drivers of growth that your companies depend on—research, job training, infrastructure, education for our workforce—they are going to be reduced effectively at a time when other countries around the world are racing to get ahead of us. On the other hand, if Congress does reverse some of these cuts, then our own budget office estimates it would add about half a million dollars—half a million jobs to our economy next year alone, about 0.4 percent to GDP.

And keep in mind that we can afford it right now. All the things I said at the front in terms of the recovery that we've made, we've also reduced the deficit by two-thirds. Right now it's about 2.8 percent of GDP. We've reduced our deficit faster than some of those countries that pursued strict austerity policies and weren't thinking about how to grow the economy.

And so we are well positioned without adding to the deficit. Since the—I want to repeat: Since I took office, we've cut the deficit by more than two-thirds. And the good news is, we might actually be moving beyond some of the stale debates we've been having about spending and revenue over the past several years if what economists and people who are knowledgeable about the Federal budget are listened to, as opposed by this being driven by short-term politics.

People in both parties, including some of the leading Republican candidates for President, have been putting out proposals. Some I agree with, some I don't. I'll give you one example, though. You've got two leading candidates in the Republican side who have said that we should eliminate the carried interest loophole. Now, there's disagreement in this room around that. But I will tell you that keeping this tax loophole, which leads to folks who are doing very well paying lower rates than their secretaries, is not in any demonstrable way improving our economy.

On the other hand, if we close the tax loophole, we could double the number of workers in America's job training programs. We could help another 4 million students afford college. Now, these are sensible choices that if you were running your business and you took a look at it, you'd make that decision. Well, America should too. And this is an example of how we can maintain fiscal responsibility while at the same time making the investments that we need to grow.

So the bottom line is this: Seven years ago, if we had listened to some politicians who said we could only cut our way to prosperity, the fact is, we'd be worse off today. If we listen to them now, then we're going to be worse off tomorrow.

I hope that you will talk to your friends in Congress, Democrats and Republicans alike. As Congress flirts with another shutdown, remind them of what is at stake. We will have some disagreements sometimes. I do not expect to get a hundred percent of what I want in any conversation, including with my wife. [*Laughter*] But I do expect us to stay focused on why we're here, which is to help the American people and businesses like yours and your workers do better. That's our job. We're not supposed to be impeding progress. We're supposed to be advancing progress, accelerating it.

And if our leaders can put common sense over ideology and the good of the country before the good of the party, then we'll do just fine. Despite the perennial doom and gloom

that I guess is inevitably part of a Presidential campaign, America is winning right now. America is great right now. We can do even better. But the reason that I'm so confident about our future is not because of our Government or size of our GDP or our military, but because everybody in this country that I meet around the—regardless of their station in life, their race, their religion, the region they live in—they do believe in a common creed that if people work hard in this country, they should be able to get ahead. And I know that's what you believe. That's the values that you try to instill in your companies as well. My hope is, is that that decency, that hard work, that common sense is going to be reflected here in Washington.

So, with that, let me take some questions. And I'm going to start with Randall, because since he volunteered for what I'm sure is a thankless job of being head of the BRT. [*Laughter*]

Trans-Pacific Partnership

Business Roundtable Chairman Randall L. Stephenson. I'll get it going here. I know there are a lot of other questions for you. But Leader McConnell was just here a little earlier, and he gave us all a cause to exhale, talking about the budget, and seemed confident that we would get a place where we would have a budget. And in the context of that, he spoke about how split Government can actually provide opportunities for getting big things done that might be hard to get done otherwise. And he caused a head snapper with all of us when he gave you a very strong compliment over your——

The President. I'm—my head is snapping. [*Laughter*] What did I do?

Mr. Stephenson. Trade promotion authority.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Stephenson. And how you worked that and you worked it very aggressively. And by the way, all of us in here—Mike Froman, I don't know if he's here, and Jeff Zients are very complimentary of the work that was done there.

So now you have the authority to get a trade deal done. It's going to have to come back to Congress and so forth. Talk to us a little bit about your view of the opportunity to get the T—the trade—the Trans-Pacific deal done.

The President. I am confident that we can get it done, and I believe we can get it done this year. The trade ministers should be meeting again sometime in the next several weeks. They have the opportunity to close the deal. Most chapters have been completed at this point. And I'm confident that it will, in fact, accomplish our central goal, which is to make sure that we've got a level playing field for American businesses and American workers in the fastest growing region of the world.

There are going to be unprecedented protections for labor standards and environmental standards, but also for IP protection, also for making sure that when any company here makes an investment, that they're not being disadvantaged, but are instead being treated like domestic companies for commercial purposes.

And so the notion here is, is that we've got 11 nations who represent the fastest growing, most populous part of the world buying into a high-standards trade deal that allows us and your companies on a consistent basis to compete. And the good news is, is that with a lot of tough negotiating and a lot of pushing and pulling—mainly by Mr. Froman, but occasionally, I get called in to lob a call into one of my counterparts—I think that we'll—we're going to get this done.

Now, the key then, once we close the negotiations and we have an agreement, is to get TPP through Congress. We got it through. I will return the compliment of—Mitch McConnell worked very hard and very creatively to get it done. We should not assume, though, that because the authority was done, that we automatically are going to be able to get TPP done.

And I'll be honest with you: The reason is that the politics around trade are tough. And I said this even in the runup to getting TPA authority. A lot of Americans, when they think of trade, think of plants in their hometown or nearby shutting down and moving to Mexico or China and American manufacturing and good-paying jobs being lost. That's the image of trade.

And the argument that I have made consistently to Democrats has been that there may have been some mistakes made in past trade agreements in not, for example, having enforceable labor and environmental provisions that put American companies that are doing the right thing at a disadvantage; that there weren't enough safeguards for intellectual property and the abuses of state-owned enterprises and subsidies that companies may have been involved with.

But that's the status quo now. And if you want to correct those things, we've got to raise the bar. I didn't fully persuade all my Democratic colleagues, because the politics are tough. And I was willing to take my case to the Democratic Caucus and to talk to my friends in organized labor and say that we can't look backwards, we've got to look forward. We're going to have to compete in these areas.

Here's the concern politically, is that I think within the Republican Party some of the same impulses that are anti–immigration reform, some of the same impulses that see the entire world as a threat and we've got to wall ourselves off, some of those same impulses also start creeping into the trade debate. And a party that traditionally was pro–free trade now has a substantial element that may feel differently.

And so the BRT, I think, you've got to put Engler to work over there. To their credit, both Mitch McConnell and John Boehner, I think, are on the right program here, but they're going to need some help potentially with their membership, because the closer we get to political season, the tighter some of these votes get. I will tell you this though: I am confident that if I'm presenting an agreement to Congress, that it will meet the commitment that I made that this would be the highest standard, most progressive trade deal in American history. It will be good for American business and American workers. All right. Yes.

Cybersecurity

Frontier Communications Corporation Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Maggie Wilderotter. Hi, Mr. President. Thank you for being with us.

The President. Hi, Maggie.

Ms. Wilderotter. I wanted to ask you about cybersecurity. You put an Executive order in place earlier this week because of the issues we have with information sharing and with liabilities. And we at the BRT are very supportive of the legislation that has passed the House and is now in progress in the Senate. And I wanted to just get your thoughts on how you're thinking about this and also with the upcoming visit of the President of China about cybersecurity and our relationship with China.

The President. This is an issue that is not going away. It is going to be more and more important, and it is going to be very challenging. It's challenging in part because the Internet itself, the architecture of it was not intended to carry trillions of dollars of transactions and everybody's personal information. It was designed for a couple of professors to trade academic papers. And so the kind of security that we are looking for was not embedded into the DNA of the Internet.

And the vulnerabilities are significant, and they are being exploited by not just state actors, but also nonstate actors and criminal gangs at an accelerating pace. So this is something that from a national security perspective and from a business perspective we're going to have to continue to concentrate on.

One of the big issues that you mentioned, Maggie, that we're focused on is this encryption issue. And there is a legitimate tension around this issue. On the one hand, the stronger the encryption, the better we can potentially protect our data. And so there's an argument that says, we want to turbocharge our encryption so that nobody can crack it. On the other hand, if you have encryption that doesn't have any way to get in there, we are now empowering ISIL, child pornographers, others to essentially be able to operate within a black box in ways that we've never experienced before during the telecommunications age. And I'm not talking, by the way, about some of the controversies around NSA, I'm talking about the traditional FBI going to a judge, getting a warrant, showing probable cause, but still can't get in.

So we've created a process around which to see if we can square the circle here and reconcile the need for greater and greater encryption and the legitimate needs of national security and law enforcement. And I won't say that we've cracked the code yet, but we've got some of the smartest folks not just in Government, but also in the private sector working together to try to resolve it. And what's interesting is, even in the private sector, even in the tech community, people are on different sides of this thing.

With respect to China, this will probably be one of the biggest topics that I discuss with President Xi. We have repeatedly said to the Chinese Government that we understand traditional intelligence-gathering functions that all states, including us, engage in. And we will do everything we can to stop you from getting state secrets or transcripts of a meeting that I've had, but we understand you're going to be trying to do that. That is fundamentally different from your Government or its proxies engaging directly in industrial espionage and stealing trade secrets, stealing proprietary information from companies. That we consider an act of aggression that has to stop.

And we are preparing a number of measures that will indicate to the Chinese that this is not just a matter of us being mildly upset, but is something that will put significant strains on the bilateral relationship if not resolved and that we are prepared to take some countervailing actions in order to get their attention.

My hope is, is that it gets resolved short of that, and ultimately, the goal should be to have some basic international framework that won't be perfect, because there's still going to be a lot of nonstate actors that—and hackers who are very good, and we're still going to have to have good defense and still have to be able to find the fingerprints of those and apprehend them and stop networks that are engaged in cybercrime. But among states, there has to be a framework that is analogous to what we've done with nuclear power because nobody stands to gain.

And frankly, although the Chinese and Russians are close, we're still the best at this. And if we wanted to go on offense, a whole bunch of countries would have some significant problems. And we don't want to see the Internet weaponized in that way. That requires, I think, some tough negotiations. That won't be a 1-year process, but we'd like to see if we can—if we and the Chinese are able to coalesce around a process for negotiations, then I think we can bring a lot of other countries along. Okay?

Ms. Wilderotter. And we will work with you on that too.

The President. Good.

Ms. Wilderotter. Thank you.

The President. Thank you. Ursula.

Tax Reform

Xerox Corporation Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Ursula M. Burns. Thank you for being here. It's also good to be reminded occasionally of some of the progress that we've made in, like, a complete sentence. So I thank you for that as well.

The President. Yes.

Ms. Burns. And some recent ones—TPA is good; even the Iran deal, really good. Health care standing up. All good. The place that we haven't made a lot of progress, but that's really important for business and business progress, is on tax and tax reform.

And what we're getting to now is, I think, almost kind of like being backed in a corner. So, since you can't get a grand deal, we're starting to talk about subdeals. And the subdeals in and of themselves are destructive, in the Business Roundtable's view, to the grand deal, which is total tax reform or comprehensive tax reform.

The President. Right.

Ms. Burns. So can you help us think about how we should negotiate this duality that we're in right now?

The President. Yes.

Ms. Burns. And where do you think we're going to end up?

The President. We put forward a proposal early on that I'm confident I could sell to this group. Not everybody would be thrilled, but I think I could argue that over time would be good for business, because essentially what we

proposed was the traditional framework for tax reform: close loopholes, lower rates. We'd address international taxation in ways that currently put American businesses at a disadvantage and would allow for a repatriation, but would not simply empty out the Treasury and would generate enough revenue that we could actually also pay for some infrastructure.

And our hope was that we'd get some nibbles on the other side. To his credit, Paul Ryan expressed real interest in discussions and negotiations. But the—your previous speaker, Mitch McConnell, has said that he is not interested in getting tax reform—comprehensive tax reform of that sort—done.

So there's still work being done. We're still in conversations with Mr. Ryan. And I know that Senator Schumer and others have still been working on the possibilities of a fairly robust package. But ultimately, you're going to have to have the leader of the Senate majority party bought in to try to get this done.

Tax—I understand why tax reform is elusive: because those of us who believe in a simpler, fairer, more competitive tax framework in the abstract sometimes look at our bottom lines and say, I don't know, that deduction is helping us pretty good here. And even if this organization has been supportive, there are other business organizations in town that have some pretty strong influence over the Republican Party that haven't been as wild on it, partly because their view is, is that the only kind of tax reform that's acceptable is one that would also lower all rates, regardless of its effect on the deficit. That's just not something that is viable.

So we're going to keep on working on it. My suggestion would be that the BRT continue to encourage Speaker Boehner, Paul Ryan, Mitch McConnell to come up with an ambitious package. And what I can assure you is, is that the White House will take it seriously. We don't expect that everything in our original package would go forward.

But what—the one thing that we couldn't do—and I get concerned sometimes that what is labeled as tax reform ends up just being cuts, you're not closing the loopholes, and as a consequence, it's a huge drain on the Treasury. We then suddenly are accused of running up the deficit to help your tax rates, and we're not doing enough to help grow the economy and help ordinary workers. So that's the one direction we can't go in. All right?

Yes, Tom.

Alternative and Renewable Energy Sources and Technologies/Climate Change

Southern Company Chairman, President, and Chief Executive Officer Thomas A. Fanning. Yes. Thank you for being here. I'd love to hear your thoughts on energy policy. But I know we talk a lot about "all of the above," but I think what's really changing, kind of in an unprecedented way here recently, are technology revolutions that are occurring either in the production of energy or, perhaps more importantly, in the use of energy—

The President. Yes.

Mr. Fanning. ——that gives Americans, I think, a way to play offense in what has been a set of unprecedented challenges.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Fanning. What's your thoughts on that?

The President. Tom, I think you described it well. I am much more optimistic about our ability to get a handle around energy that is good for our economy, good for business, good for consumers, good for job creation, and maybe saves the planet in the process. I'm much more optimistic about that now than I was when I started as President.

And a good example is just when you look at what's happened with solar. I mean, we're not quite at Moore's Law yet, but the pace at which the unit costs for solar energy have gone down is stunning. We've seen not quite the same pace, but similar progress around wind. Our natural gas production is unprecedented. And I have been very supportive of our natural gas production as being not only important to our economy, but also geopolitically. It's a huge recipe for energy independence as long as we get it—the methane discharge issues—right. And I think there are ways of doing that with sound science. So that's on the production side.

And as you said, on the utilization side, all of you are—there's not a company here that is not producing significantly more product with less energy than you were just 10 years ago and certainly than you were 20 years ago. Everybody here has seen the power of tracking utilization, identifying waste, and timing issues—around when is energy expensive, when is energy cheap—so there's enormous progress on the commercial side. And then, individual households now with things like Nest or the equivalents, we're able to fine-tune our energy usage in ways that we just haven't seen before.

And then, you've got the whole transportation sector in which we've continued to make significant progress in Detroit as well as upstarts like Tesla. There are still some distribution and network issues around the transportation revolution, although companies like UPS are doing a great job, I think, already experimenting with their fleets. So that's all good news.

I would say that the big challenge now, if we're going to realize all the potential here, is to work with utilities so that they have a business model in which they're making money while seeing this change in distribution patterns and grid, because I think that there's still some legitimate economic issues there that have to be sorted through. And it's tricky because it's a patchwork system; we don't have one national grid, obviously.

The second thing is, investment in basic research needs to continue. Battery technology is greatly improved, but we still haven't seen all the breakthroughs that I think that we can make with battery technology that would make a huge difference in storage. And that's an exciting area for development.

And then, I would urge the BRT—and some of you individually, as companies, have already done this—view the issue of climate change and the Paris conference that's going to be coming up at the end of this year as an opportunity rather than as a problem. Because this is coming; it's coming generationally. If you talk to your kids or my kids, they are much more attuned to this issue. Consumers are going to be caring about it more and more. The environmental effects that we're seeing—I'm going to be calling Jerry Brown later today just to talk about California wildfires. Some of you may have read the snowpack in the Sierra Nevada is lowest it's been in 500 years. The flooding problems that we're already seeing in places like South Florida; it's just—during high tide, suddenly, billions of dollars of property is under water.

So this is coming. And for us to be out ahead of it and to think about how our ingenuity and our science can solve these problems is going to give us a jump on everybody else. So there is a pledge that the—some members of the BRT have organized around supporting a strong Paris agreement. I would encourage you to sign up on that and look for opportunities on this. And that includes companies that have been in the traditional fossil fuel areas. Because you know—if you know how to do oil and gas well, you can figure out how to do solar well; you can figure out to make money doing it. You can figure out how to create efficiencies that help your bottom line.

And what we've tried to do with the Clean Power Plan is to give States flexibility, understanding everybody has got a different energy mix. So, down south, we approved the first nuclear plant in a generation, basically, because we think nuclear needs to be part of that package. I'm a big believer that there are going to be different ways to skin the cat on this thing. We just have to set a baseline in which all of us understand the direction we need to go. Instead of us spending a lot of time fighting science, let's go with science. We usually do better when we're on the side of facts and evidence and science. I—just as a general rule, that's proved to be our strength as Americans.

Yes. Jim.

China/U.S. Economic Competitiveness

Boeing Company Chairman of the Board, President, and Chief Executive Officer W. James McNerney, Jr. If I could just turn back to China for a second. The—there are a lot of issues we've got to sort out, and you mentioned a couple of them: cybersecurity, their feelings about TPP, their own economy. Their inward

turn in the name of creating a consumer economy has had some protectionist elements that we don't like. I think, though—I think many in this room would like to see some kind of positive outcome from this summit as well that underlines our mutual benefit if we can figure out some of these things and find a way for the world's two biggest economies to see a path forward as well as all the issues we've got.

And I—do you have a comment on the tone you're going to try to set with the President and roles that we could play in supporting both the—managing our relationship as well as finding a future for it?

The President. My tone with respect to China has been pretty consistent. It doesn't jump up and down depending on where the polls are. My view is that China should be and will continue to be a economic competitor; that we need to make sure that we are reaching an understanding with them about our presence as a Pacific power, but that it is in our interest for China to continue what has been dubbed a "peaceful, orderly rise." I think that's good for the world. China is a big place with a lot of people. And we're better off if those people are eating and have shelter and are buying consumer goods, rather than starving and writhing on the streets.

And so what I've consistently communicated—first to President Hu when I came into office, now President Xi—is, our goal is to have them as a partner in helping to maintain a set of international rules and norms that benefit everybody; that in fact, were what facilitated China's rise. I mean, they were essentially riding on our backs for the last 30 years because we were underwriting peace, security, the free flow of commerce, international rules in the financial sector.

And as they have matured, what we've said to them is, with power comes responsibility, so now you've got to step up. You can't act as if you are a third world country and pursue protectionist policies or engage in dumping or not protect intellectual property at a time when we're now—when you're now the second and, eventually, probably the first largest economy in the world.

You can't simply pursue an export-driven strategy, because you're too big. You're not going to be able to grow your economy at the same pace over the next 20 years that you did in the last 20 years. Once your economy reaches a certain size, there's not enough global market to absorb that, which means that you've got to start thinking about transparency within your own economy and how are you setting up a safety net so that workers have some cushion and, in turn, are willing to spend money as opposed to stuffing it in a mattress.

You've got to be concerned about environmental issues, because you can't breathe in Beijing. And that spills over for all of us. And you—and as a large country with a powerful military, you can't go around pushing your little neighbors around just because you're bigger, but you have to start abiding by a basic code of conduct and a set of rules, because ultimately, you will be advantaged by everybody following the rules.

And I think, in some areas, the Chinese understand this; I think in other areas, they don't. I think in other areas, they still see themselves as the poor country that shouldn't have any obligations internationally. And in some cases, they still feel that when we call them on issues like their behavior in the South China Sea or on intellectual property theft, that we are trying to contain them as opposed to us just wanting them to abide by the same rules that helped create an environment in which they can rise.

So—but I—but the good news is that our fates are sufficiently intertwined, that—and in many ways, they still need us a lot more than we need them—that I think that there are going to be continuing areas in which they move, as long as we don't resort to the kind of loose talk and name-calling that I notice some of our Presidential candidates engage in—people you know. [*Laughter*] It's—it tends not to be constructive.

The one—so bottom line, though, is, Jim, I think this summit will be useful. I think there are going to be a lot of outcomes around things like energy and climate change, around improvements in how they deal with investors,

that will show constructive progress. I think our military-to-military conversations have been much better than they were when I began office.

The one thing I would suggest that the BRT can do—two things. Number one, and I think I've said this to you—some of you in the past: When your companies have a problem in China and you want us to help, you have to let us help. Don't tell us on the side, we've got this problem, you need to look into it, but then—but don't—but leave our names out of it because we want to be punished kind of thing.

Typically, we are not effective with the Chinese unless we are able to present facts and evidence of a problem. Otherwise, they'll just stonewall and slow-walk issues. So, if we're seeing problems in terms of the competitive environment there, in terms of protecting your IP, in terms of unfair competition that runs afoul of understanding the principles that have already been established, you've got to let us know and let us be your advocates. That's important.

The second thing, I think, everybody here should do is, is not fall into the same trap that we fell into around Japan in the 1980s, which is, somehow, China is taking over just like Japan was taking over, and we're in inevitable decline. This whole argument—I'm just going to go on a quick rant here for a second—[*laughter*]—this whole notion that somehow we're getting outcompeted, outdealt, out-this, out-that, we're losing, we're in—nobody outside the United States understands what we're talking about. [*Laughter*]

I mean, we've got problems. We've got issues. Our biggest problem is gridlock in Washington, and that's just not making some sensible policies. But overall, our cards are so much better than everybody else's. Our pool of quality businesses and talent and the—our institutions and our rule of law and how we manage and adapt to new and changing circumstances and our dominance in knowledge-based industries—nobody matches us. And we attract—the best talent around the world still wants to come here if we'd just let them come.

So I think it's important for business voices to point out, every once in a while, America is in the driver's seat if we make some smart decisions. And that's not a partisan comment, that is just the facts. There is not a country out there right now, including China, that wouldn't look at us with envy right now.

And so our problem is not that China is going to outnegotiate us and—or that Mr. Putin is sort of outstrategizing us. Anybody taken a look at the Russian economy lately? [*Laughter*] That's not our problem. Our problem is us, typically. We're the—we engage in—and I'm being generous when I say "we"—[*laughter*]—but we engage in self-inflicted wounds like this potential Government shutdown. It's unnecessary.

All right. I've got time for a couple more questions. Good to see you. How you doing? How you doing, Ed? How is everybody back home?

Export-Import Bank Reauthorization

State Farm Mutual Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Edward B. Rust, Jr. Very good.

The President. Good.

Mr. Rust. Along that, in that same vein, looking earlier this summer, the expiration of the Ex-Im Bank authorization.

The President. Speaking of self-inflicted wounds.

Mr. Rust. Understand. And part of the ongoing discussion, debate here in Washington, the Senate has attached a reauthorization, as you know——

The President. Right.

Mr. Rust. ——to the transportation bill——

The President. Right.

Mr. Rust. ——which is now down at the House. And we—on Monday the Roundtable sent a letter to the leadership on both sides in Congress pointing out really the benefits of reauthorization, that some of those get lost in this debate. Because really, it's been characterized as only benefiting a few companies, which ignores the thousands of people who are basically employed by our suppliers across the country, and the impact—positive impact that has, as well as it's a net generator revenue for the

governor—for the Government. And we have plans to have further discussions later today and this week with leadership in the House.

Do you have any—we had a good discussion with your team this morning. Do you have any insights that you could share with us that would help us in getting that reauthorization?

The President. It is mind-boggling that this wasn't reauthorized a year ago. And it is this weird reversal in which the principle opponents are the Tea Party caucus and the Republican Party.

Somehow, Ex-Im Bank has become this cause celebre of what have—some of the Presidential candidates called "crony capitalism."

Mr. Rust. Yes.

The President. And what's ironic is obvious—I think some of you know the backstory. There was, I think, a member of this organization that kind of started this whole thing because they were upset about some planes being sold to—[*laughter*]—a competitor on a route, and suddenly, this caught fire in the right-wing Internet. And it's just hard to explain.

Look, Ed, I had a group of small businesses, ranging from, what, four people to a couple of hundred people, talking about how they use Ex-Im. This is the only way that they can get into these markets. And as you said, Ex-Im doesn't cost the Government. This is not a money loser for us. And I don't have to tell Immelt or Jim how important it is. I keep on telling them I expect a gold watch from them because it seems like every time I take a foreign trip, I've got to sell some turbine or plane. So—[*laughter*].

And I was concerned about Jeff's announcement that jobs that were here in the United States are now going to be overseas because we don't get this done. But that's true for the supply chain; it's also true for some smaller companies that use Ex-Im directly. It's not just that they're part of the GE or Boeing supply chain, it's that they're selling tea to a country and this is the only mechanism they have to be able to make those sales.

The good news is, McConnell and Boehner both say they want to get it done. As you said, there were—we've already shown there are sufficient votes for it in the Senate, and we actually think there are sufficient votes for it in the House. I would concentrate your attention on House Republican caucus members. And I think you have to flood the zone and let them know this is important. And that includes, by the way, talking to individual members who, in their districts, potentially have companies that are being adversely affected as long as Ex-Im is frozen.

But my expectation is, it gets done during the course of these budget negotiations. And I—we're going to push as hard as we can to get it done. Okay? Yes.

Ozone Regulation

American Electric Power, Inc., Chairman, President, and Chief Executive Officer Nicholas K. Akins. Mr. President, thank you for being here today. One of the issues that we deal with and we talked about last time you were here was regulations. And one of the areas that the Business Roundtable is very focused on these days is the ozone rule, which October 1, your administration will be coming out with a recommendation associated with that.

The Business Roundtable position is that we need to maintain the 75 parts per billion. To lower that standard when technology doesn't exist and when communities are already advancing toward the 75 goal—if you lower it to 70, it's going to introduce another 200 counties in this country into nonattainment, which basically is a "we're not open for business." And that's our concern. Do you have any thoughts on that or what the administration's plans are in that regard?

The President. There's a lot of complicated technical issues involved in this, but I'll try to simplify it as much as possible.

Number one, we're under a court order to do this. So I think there may be a misperception that the EPA can do whatever it wants here. There were lawsuits brought under the previous administration that continued into my administration. We went before a judge. We actually, I think properly, got some additional time, because there was the notion that we were going to lower standards a few years ago

and then immediately get new data and force everybody to lower them all over again. And we said, let's just do this one time in a sensible way so that people can plan.

But we've got some legal constraints. This is not something that just popped out of my head full blown. And so I always enjoy seeing the advertising for "Obama's ozone plan." The ozone rules date back to when I was, I think, still in law school, before I had any gray hair. And there are some fairly stringent statutory guidelines by which the EPA is supposed to evaluate the standards. So the EPA is following the science and the statutes as best as it can.

We are mindful that in some cases, because of the nature of where pollutants are generated, where they blow, that this can create a really complicated situation for certain local jurisdictions and local communities, and some States and counties end up being hit worse than others. And we're trying to work with those States and those communities as best we can taking in their concerns into account.

So I guess the bottom line is this is—you can legitimately go after me on the clean power plant rule because we—that was hatched by us, and I believe that we need to deal with climate change. And so we can have a lengthy debate about that.

And here on ozone, this is an existing statute and an existing mechanism, and we are charged with implementing it based on the science that's presented to us. And that's what we're trying to do, but we're taking this input into account. I recognize some of the concerns.

I will say this—last point I'll make on this—even with the costs associated with implementing the ozone rule, when you do a cost-benefit, the amount of lives saved, asthma averted, and so forth is still substantially higher than the costs. Now, that doesn't necessarily resolve all the concerns that people may have about local costs being borne, whereas the savings are spread out more broadly. And those are legitimate economic issues that have to be considered. And I—the EPA has been listening to, I think, every stakeholder there.

But I think what you'll see in the analysis overall is: We don't issue a regulation where the costs are not lower than the benefits. And if you look at the regulations we've generally put forward, the costs are substantially lower than the benefits that are generated. Okay?

Okay, Doug.

Cuba-U.S. Relations

Caterpillar Inc. Chairman of the Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer Douglas R. Oberhelman. Yes, thank you, Mr. President. Many of us are interested in Cuba.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Oberhelman. And the opening there has been positive. There is a lot of issues——

The President. Right.

Mr. Oberhelman. ——to get to full normal relations. Just how do you see that path happening? And what's the future of that in your opinion? Thank you.

The President. I don't think it's going to be an overnight transformation, but I am convinced that by reengaging Cuba, reengaging the Cuban people, that we are creating the environment in which a generational change and transition will take place in that country. And already, you're seeing conversations taking place about does—how is Cuba going to accommodate an influx of tourists, and how do they think about the Internet and open communications in order to be able to participate in a modern economy?

And that inevitably then leads to questions about can you hire—can a company hire a Cuban directly, a foreign investor, as opposed to going through the Government? And over time, that creates space for personal freedom and, I think, a long-term political transition.

For now, what we've said is that we will, step by step, look for areas and opportunities within our authorities. As long as Congress still has the embargo in place, there are certain things we can't do. But there are certain things we can do, for example, on telecommunications, and we're looking for opportunities there.

And we will also continue to press the Cuban Government around issues of political freedom. And when His Holiness the Pope comes, he's going to be visiting Cuba. That, I

think, is going to be an opportunity for more interesting conversations inside of Cuba.

My biggest suggestion would be for the BRT just to start having a conversation on a bipartisan basis about lifting the embargo. It doesn't necessarily happen—have to happen—or even should happen—all in one fell swoop. But I think if you look at the economic opportunities that are presented, they're significant. And it doesn't make much sense that a country 90 miles off the shore of Florida that is not at this point a significant threat to us and that has shown itself willing to at least look beyond its borders for the first time—even if it's still scared of what it might bring—it doesn't make sense for us to keep sticking to the old ways of doing business.

So I'll actually take one more question. I usually—and then, I'll come around and say hi to everybody. So anybody else? Yes, go ahead.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Education

IBM President and Chief Executive Officer Virginia M. Rometty. Mr. President, again, thank you. And I know a topic near to your heart has been education——

The President. Yes.

Ms. Rometty. ——for young folks, and you've spent a lot of time on this. And many of us have done things, private partner—private-public partnerships.

The President. Yes.

Ms. Rometty. And you recently made a comment about computer science for all high school kids, which I think is an important point, because technology is such a broad topic.

The President. Right.

Ms. Rometty. It will infiltrate all jobs——

The President. Everything.

Ms. Rometty. ——in the future. So maybe a chance to make some comments about how you envision something like that actually taking root over the long term that we could make some progress with it—on scale. Yes.

The President. Well, first of all, I want to commend Ginni and IBM because you guys have done some terrific work. Anybody who wants some inspiration, go to the high school that IBM is participating in in Brooklyn where kids—a collaboration between the public school system, the City Colleges of New York, the CUNY system, and IBM.

And you've got kids from—most of them, parents never went to college. A lot of them immigrant kids. And they are marching through STEM education, pre-engineering education. They're getting essentially college credits by the time they're sophomores or juniors in high school. They're able to save money because in 5 years in high school, they come out with an associate's degree. They then either are transferring to a 4-year university with those credits, or they're starting to work with IBM because they've been apprenticing and the curriculum design has given them confidence that if they do well, they're going to be able to get a job.

That model is something that we're actually looking to try to duplicate all across the country. And the good news, as I mentioned at the top, is because of the strong work that Arne Duncan has done, the strong work that a lot of Governors and local communities have done to increase accountability, creativity, have high expectations for kids, bust through some of the old bureaucratic obstacles, we've—we are seeing highest reading scores, highest math scores, highest graduation rates. And part of our goal here is to improve STEM education generally. A critical element of that is understanding this computer age that these kids are immersed in. And I don't want them just to know how to use their phone to play video games, I want them to know how that phone works and, potentially, code it and program it.

And what's remarkable—I was—I'm about the age where, I think my high school just had, like, the first coding class when I was maybe in seventh or eighth grade. But this is what—you had, like, those cards, and it was—and the punch cards. [*Laughter*] And now, the way these—the tools and resources that are available for kids starting in first, second grade—we have these science fairs. and these little Girl Scout troops come in, and they've coded, they've designed their own games, and—or

simulations of entire towns with people and all kinds of scenarios that they've figured out.

And so it's actually something that they naturally gravitate to. We just have to start early. It's almost like a foreign language, where rather than try to catch kids when they're in 10th, 11th, 12th grade, make it part of the broader curriculum and incorporate it into how you're teaching math and how you're teaching science and how you're teaching social studies. That seems to be the way in which kids get most engaged.

So we're doing a lot of work with many of you individually as companies on this STEM education issue. We hope that you will continue to participate. You've been great partners on that front.

I'll just say in closing, it's always a pleasure to be here. I want to just reiterate, as we enter into the silly season of politics, that the primary thing that is holding back a lot of potential growth, jobs, improved bottom lines, greater stability is well within our control right now—it—and are things that traditionally enjoyed bipartisan support: Ex-Im Bank, getting TPP done, financing and executing on an infrastructure policy. I've had conversations with folks like Larry Fink and others about if we're open to looking at new, creative ways of financing it, but the notion that we're not doing that right now makes absolutely no sense—investing in research and development.

These are not partisan issues. There are some areas where there have traditionally been legitimate arguments between Democrats and Republicans. There are some issues, like on environmental regulations or financial regulations, where Jamie and I may disagree or Nick and I may disagree. And we can have those arguments, and we probably won't convince each other on some of these things.

But what I'm looking at is the low-hanging fruit that are no-brainers and that nobody here would argue with. And the notion that we're not doing them right now because—primarily because a faction within one of our parties has gone off the rails and sees a conspiracy around everything or simply is opposed to anything I propose even if they used to propose it—[*laughter*]—that's a problem.

And I think it's very important for all of you to just step back and take a look at it, because you still have influence on at least some of those folks. And challenge them. Why wouldn't we do things that everybody knows make sense?

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:24 a.m. at the headquarters of the Business Roundtable. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. John E. "Jeb" Bush of Florida and Donald J. Trump, chairman and chief executive officer, Trump Organization, in their capacities as 2016 Republican Presidential candidates; John M. Engler, president, Business Roundtable; Gov. Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown, Jr., of California; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; Jeffrey R. Immelt, chairman and chief executive officer, General Electric Co.; Pope Francis; Laurence D. Fink, chairman and chief executive officer, BlackRock, Inc.; and James L. Dimon, chairman and chief executive officer, JPMorgan Chase and Co. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Ms. Wilderotter referred to H.R. 1560.

Remarks During a Meeting With National Guard Specialist Aleksander Skarlatos, USA, Airman First Class Spencer Stone, USAF, and Anthony Sadler

September 17, 2015

Well, these three gentlemen really don't need any introduction. I think all of you are familiar with the incredible story of three high school friends who were getting together—two of whom had served in uniform on behalf of the United States Armed Forces—thinking

that they were just going to have a fun reunion up in Paris and ended up engaging a potential catastrophic situation and pinning down someone who clearly was intent on doing a lot of harm to a lot of people and inflicting terror on the French people.

Because of their courage, because of their quick thinking, because of their teamwork, it's fair to say that a lot of people were saved and a real calamity was averted. And the French people have already bestowed on them the highest honor that they can—the Legion of Honor—at a ceremony presided over by President Hollande of France. I had an opportunity to talk to him, and he told me that he could not have been more grateful for what these three outstanding young Americans did.

And I just wanted to make sure that, having talked to them on the phone right after the event, that I had a chance to shake their hands in person and tell them what I think they've heard from a lot of people, which is, they represent the very best of America: American character. And it's these kinds of young people who make me extraordinarily optimistic and hopeful about our future.

And I want to thank each and every one of them and wish them well. I'm glad to see that Spencer, apparently, his hand is in pretty good shape and making real progress. And he intends to continue to pursue his work in medicine and caring for people. Anthony is interested in sports medicine and therapy. And Aleksander, as soon as he is finished on "Dancing With the Stars"—[*laughter*]—plans to get into law enforcement.

Whatever they do, they're going to do it well. And we just want to say thank you to them for not only saving so many lives, but also for making America look so good. All right?

Mr. Sadler. Thank you, sir.

Spc. Skarlatos. Thank you.

A1C Stone. Thank you.

The President. Thank you. Come on, let's get one more—we'll get one good picture with everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:07 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Ayoub El Khazzani, suspected gunman in the Thalys train attack outside Oignies in Pas-de-Calais, France, on August 21.

Remarks at a White House Screening of the VICE News Documentary "Fixing the System"

September 18, 2015

Hello, everybody! Hello, hello, hello. Everybody, please have a seat, have a seat. Have a seat. Well, I just wanted to stop by—[*laughter*]—and just say thank you, because we have in this audience some people who are doing outstanding work on behalf of criminal justice reform. I want to thank Angie for the introduction. I want to recognize a couple of Members of Congress who are here, who have been great champions of this. Congresswoman Frederica Wilson from the great State of Florida. And a great champion of this issue, he is working tirelessly in the Senate to advance some important legislation, Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey.

We also have former Attorney General and buddy of mine, Eric Holder. I know our current Attorney General I think had to leave a little bit earlier, but obviously is deeply involved in these efforts. I want to thank Shane Smith and everybody at VICE for the great work and efforts that they've made in the production of what you're going to be seeing here today. And then there's a guy named Al Sharpton over here. [*Laughter*] What's up, Al? He's been working on these issues for a while.

America spends $80 billion a year keeping folks locked up. We represent 5 percent of the world's population, 25 percent of its inmates. That's not an indicator that we want to be the leader in. Keep in mind that I'm the father of two kids, and I care about them being safe, and I am fiercely protective of them. And I think it is important for all of us to recognize that in

too many communities, crime destroys lives and hope and opportunity, and we cannot diminish the impact of crime. And I think everybody here recognizes that we have to have a criminal justice system that is effective and that prosecutes individuals in a fair way to ensure that we as a society are able to maintain peace and order and security. That's not something that anybody here would argue against.

But what we also know is that for too many individuals, particularly nonviolent offenders caught up in an environment in which drugs are pervasive and opportunity is lacking, the punishment does not fit the crime.

Too often, prosecutions, arrests are not being applied in a way that reflects our belief in equality under the law. And the effects of this mass incarceration ripple through families and communities, especially communities of color in ways that are not just a problem of the here and now, but continue across generations. So, as a society, we have to acknowledge that there is something wrong when we are locking up this many folks with this kind of frequency, concentrated in a handful of communities in cities and towns and counties across this country.

And that's why, in July, I visited the El Reno Federal penitentiary in Oklahoma—the first President, apparently, to have ever visited a prison—because the people in these prisons are deserving of our attention. They're human beings with hopes and dreams, who in many cases have made profound mistakes, but are American citizens nonetheless.

It was interesting, during that visit, we had a chance to meet with corrections officers and wardens and those who manage the system. They have an extremely difficult and often dangerous job. And we expressed our appreciation for what they do. But they also recognized that we could be doing better in how we administer justice.

And I met with a group of prisoners, and what was striking was the degree to which so many of these young people—and many of them were young; there were some older ones who were there, often because they had been serving time for mistakes they had made during their youth. And I said at the time—I think I—you may hear me say it in this program—that they weren't so different from me. I made mistakes when I was young. I didn't always follow a straight path. The primary difference between me and them was, I had more of a cushion. I had second chances. In some cases, I had resources, or I was in an environment in which when I made a mistake as a teen, that I could recover from it. And these young people didn't have any margin for error.

And that notion that as a consequence of youthful mistakes, they could end up in a lifelong cycle of crime to where the prospect of them being able to recover and reenter society with gainful employment and the ability to be part of their children's lives and to be citizens appeared remote—that the notion that that's how we think our criminal justice system should work, that that should be the end result, there's something un-American about that.

This is a country that believes in second chances. And right now we've got millions of people who aren't getting it. So we've got to make sure that our criminal justice system works. We've got to make sure that our criminal justice system keeps people safe. We have to respect the incredibly difficult job that police officers have and remind ourselves that they are protecting and serving us and they have a right to go home too. We have to recognize that there are prosecutors and judges throughout the system who want to do the right thing and feel compassion and understand the human stories that are involved in this thing, but are bound by laws that all too often have been created because of politics or misguided theories as opposed to being based on the evidence and what's required to keep people safe.

The bottom line is, we've got to make sure that our criminal justice system does not perpetuate a cycle of hopelessness, but rather lifts people up. And there's no contradiction between us being concerned and vigilant when it comes to keeping our streets safe and our children safe and also making sure that our system is fair and just and does not consign an entire class of people to a life on the margins.

And that means that we've got to support sentencing reform efforts, like the one that these Members of Congress are supporting, so that we can more effectively use our resources to protect the public. It means that we have to stay focused on prevention programs and alternatives like drug courts that can intercede with young people before they're locked into a path from which they cannot recover. It means that providing education and job training and focus inside of prisons is not being soft on crime; it is being smart about what is needed in order to make sure that people can recover from their mistakes.

And the good news is that people from Federal, State, and local governments, from law enforcement and the judiciary, from business and entertainment, and local communities are finding common ground on this issue. What's encouraging is, this is one of the few areas where we're seeing some really important bipartisan conversations taking place and members of the faith community stepping up alongside civil rights advocates in really significant and meaningful ways. And so I'm encouraged by it.

You represent the possibilities of shaping a coalition that makes this aspect of America more consistent with our ideals and our values. And for your extraordinary work, I want to thank you. But recognize this is going to be hard work. It is not going to be easy. It is not going to happen soon. We are just going to have to keep on pushing at the Federal level, but also at the State and local levels. We've got a great Attorney General currently, and we had a previous Attorney General who cared deeply about this.

But we need States attorneys and local prosecutors and sheriffs and departments all across this country to internalize these issues as well, because the Federal system is just a very—is a small portion of our overall criminal justice system. And it's not something that I can direct by fiat to change. This is something that's going to have to be a collaboration with everybody.

So that's enough talking. Thank you for the great work you're doing. And enjoy the show. All right?

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:36 p.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Angela Martinez, host, Power 105.1's "The Angie Martinez Show" in New York City; Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch; Shane Smith, owner and chief executive officer, VICE Media LLC; and civil rights leader and activist Alfred C. Sharpton, Jr.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Persons Who Commit, Threaten To Commit, or Support Terrorism

September 18, 2015

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism declared in Executive Order 13224 of September 23, 2001, is to continue in effect beyond September 23, 2015.

The crisis constituted by the grave acts of terrorism and threats of terrorism committed by foreign terrorists, including the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, in New York and Pennsylvania and against the Pentagon, and the continuing and immediate threat of further attacks on United States nationals or the Unit-

ed States that led to the declaration of a national emergency on September 23, 2001, has not been resolved. These actions continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13224 with respect to persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Weekly Address
September 19, 2015

Hi, everybody. It is hard to believe, but it was 7 years ago this week that one of Wall Street's biggest investment banks went bankrupt, triggering a meltdown on Wall Street and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. And in the months that followed, millions of Americans lost their jobs, their homes, and the savings they'd worked so hard to build.

Today's a different story. Over the past 5½ years, our businesses have created more than 13 million new jobs. The unemployment rate is lower than it's been in over 7 years. Manufacturing is growing. Housing is bouncing back. We've reduced our deficits by two-thirds. And 16 million more Americans now know the security of health insurance.

This is your progress. It's because of your hard work and sacrifice that America has come back from crisis faster than almost every other advanced nation on Earth. We remain the safest, strongest bet in the world.

Of course, you might not know all that if you only listened to the bluster of political season, when it's in the interest of some politicians to paint America as dark and depressing as possible. But I don't see it that way. I've met too many Americans who prove, day in and day out, that this is a place where anything is possible. Yes, we have a lot of work to do to rebuild a middle class that's had the odds stacked against it now for decades. But that's the thing about America: Our work is never finished. We always strive to be better, to perfect ourselves.

We just have to make the right choices. And if Republicans want to help, they can choose, right now, to pass a budget that helps us grow our economy even faster, create jobs even faster, lift people's incomes and prospects even faster. But they've only got until the end of the month to do it, or they'll shut down our Government for the second time in 2 years.

Democrats are ready to sit down and negotiate with Republicans right now. But it should be over legitimate issues like how much do we invest in education, job training, and infrastructure, not unrelated ideological issues like Planned Parenthood. We need to set our sights higher than that. We need to reverse harmful cuts to middle class economic priorities, close loopholes that benefit only a fortunate few at the top, and invest more in the things that help our entire economy grow.

There's nothing principled about the idea of another Government shutdown. There's nothing patriotic about denying the progress you've worked so hard to make. America is great right now, not because of our Government or our wealth or our power, but because of everyone who works hard every day to move this country forward. Now Congress needs to work as hard as you do.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 11:45 a.m. on September 18 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on September 19. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 18, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on September 19.

Remarks at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Phoenix Awards Dinner

September 19, 2015

Hello, CBC! I guess I get the fancier lectern here. Everybody, please have a seat. Have a seat. I know it's late. You're ready for the after parties. I should have ditched the speech and brought my playlist. [*Laughter*] Everybody looks beautiful, handsome, wonderful. Thank you, Don, for that introduction. Thank you to the CBC Foundation. And thank you to the members of the CBC.

On the challenges of our times, from giving workers a raise to getting families health coverage; on the threats of our time, from climate change to nuclear proliferation, members of the CBC have been leaders moving America forward. With your help, our businesses have created over 13 million new jobs. With your help, we've covered more than 16 million Americans with health insurance, many for the first time. Three years ago, Republicans said they'd get the unemployment rate down to 6 percent by 2017. It's down to 5.1 right now. You didn't hear much about that in the debate on Monday—on Wednesday night.

Point is, though, none of this progress would have been possible without the CBC taking tough votes when it mattered most. Whatever I've accomplished, the CBC has been there. I was proud to be a CBC member when I was in the Senate; I'm proud to be your partner today. But we're not here just to celebrate, we're here to keep going. Because with the unemployment rate for African Americans still more than double than Whites, with millions of families still working hard and still waiting to feel the recovery in their own lives, we know that the promise of this Nation, where every single American, regardless of the circumstances in which they were born, regardless of what they look like, where they come from, has the chance to succeed—that promise is not yet fulfilled.

The good thing about America, the great project of America, is that perfecting our Union is never finished. We've always got more work to do. And tonight's honorees remind us of that. They remind us of the courage and sacrifices, the work that they've done, and not just at the national level, but in local communities all across the country. We couldn't be prouder of them. The heroes of the civil rights movement whom we lost last month remind us of the work that remains to be done. American heroes like Louis Stokes and Julian Bond and Amelia Boynton Robinson.

Now, Ms. Robinson—some of you know, earlier this year, my family and I joined many in Selma for the 50th anniversary of that march. And as we crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge, I held Ms. Amelia's hand. And I thought about her and all the extraordinary women like her who were really the life force of the movement. Women were the foot soldiers. Women strategized boycotts. Women organized marches. Even if they weren't allowed to run the civil rights organizations on paper, behind the scenes, they were the thinkers and the doers making things happen each and every day, doing the work that nobody else wanted to do. They couldn't prophesize from the pulpits, but they led the charge from the pews. They were no strangers to violence. They were on the front lines. So, often, they were subject to abuse, dehumanized, but kept on going, holding families together. Mothers were beaten and gassed on Bloody Sunday. Four little girls were murdered in a Birmingham church. Women made the movement happen.

Of course, Black women have been a part of every great movement in American history, even if they weren't always given a voice. They helped plan the March on Washington, but were almost entirely absent from the program. And when pressed, male organizers added a tribute highlighting six women, none of them who were asked to make a speech. And Daisy Bates introduced her fellow honorees in just 142 words that were written by a man. Of course, Marian Anderson and Mahalia Jackson sang. But in a 3-hour program, the men gave women just 142 words. That may sound famil-

iar to some of the women in the room here tonight. [*Laughter*] The organizers even insisted on two separate parades: male leaders marching along the main route on Pennsylvania Avenue and leaders like Dorothy Height and Rosa Parks relegated to Independence Avenue. America's most important march against segregation had its own version of separation.

Black women were central in the fight for women's rights, from suffrage to the feminist movement, and yet despite their leadership, too often they were also marginalized. But they didn't give up. They didn't let up. They were too fierce for that. Black women have always understood the words of Pauli Murray that "Hope is a song in a weary throat."

It's thanks to Black women that we've come a long way since the days when a girl like Ruby Bridges couldn't go to school, when a woman like Amelia couldn't cast her vote, when we didn't have a Congressional Black Caucus and its 20 women members.

So I'm focusing on women tonight because I want them to know how much we appreciate them, how much we admire them, how much we love them. And I want to talk about what more we have to do to provide full opportunity and equality for our Black women and girls in America today.

Because all of us are beneficiaries of a long line of strong Black women who helped carry this country forward. Their work to expand civil rights opened the doors of opportunity, not just for African Americans, but for all women, for all of us: Black and White, Latino and Asian, LGBT and straight, for our First Americans and our newest Americans. And their contributions in every field—as scientists and entrepreneurs, educators, explorers—all made us stronger. Of course, they're also a majority of my household. [*Laughter*] So I care deeply about how they're doing.

Now, the good news is, despite structural barriers of race and gender, women and girls of color have made real progress in recent years. The number of Black women–owned businesses has skyrocketed. Black women have ascended the ranks of every industry. Teen pregnancy rates among girls of color are down, while high school and 4-year college graduation rates are up. That's good news.

But there's no denying that Black women and girls still face real and persistent challenges. The unemployment rate is over 8 percent for Black women. And they're overrepresented in low-paying jobs, underrepresented in management. They often lack access to economic necessities like paid leave and quality, affordable childcare. They often don't get the same quality health care that they need and have higher rates of certain chronic diseases, although that's starting to change with Obamacare. It's working, by the way, people. Just in case—[*laughter*]—just in case you needed to know.

And then, there are some of the challenges that are harder to see and harder to talk about, although Michelle, our outstanding, beautiful First Lady, talks about these struggles. Michelle will tell stories about when she was younger, people telling her she shouldn't aspire to go to the very best universities. And she found herself thinking sometimes, "Well, maybe they're right." Even after she earned two degrees from some of the best universities in America, she still faced the doubts that were rooted in deep social prejudice and stereotypes, worrying whether she was being too assertive or too angry—[*laughter*]—or too tall. I like tall women, but—[*laughter*].

And those stereotypes and social pressures, they still affect our girls. So we all have to be louder than the voices that are telling our girls they're not good enough, that they've got to look a certain way or they've got to act a certain way or set their goals at a certain level. We've got to affirm their sense of self-worth and make them feel visible and beautiful and understood and loved. And I say this as a father who strives to do this at home, but I also say this as a citizen. This is not just about my family or yours, it's about who we are as a people, who we want to be, and how we can make sure that America is fulfilling its promise because everybody is getting a chance and everybody is told they're important and everybody is given opportunity. And we've got to do more than just say we care or say we'd put our—a woman

on $10 bill, although that's a good idea. We've got to make sure they're getting some $10 bills, that they're getting paid properly. We've got to let our actions do the talking.

It is an affront to the very idea of America when certain segments of our population don't have access to the same opportunities as everybody else. It makes a mockery of our economy when Black women make 30 fewer cents for every dollar a White man earns. That adds up to thousands of dollars in missed income that determines whether a family can pay for a home or pay for college for their kids or save for retirement or give their kids a better life. And that's not just a woman's issue, that's everybody's issue. I want Michelle getting paid at some point. [*Laughter*] We've got a—an outstanding former Secretary of State here who is also former First Lady, and I know she can relate to Michelle when she says, how come I'm—how come you get paid and I don't? [*Laughter*] How did that work? [*Laughter*]

When women of color aren't given the opportunity to live up to their God-given potential, we all lose out on their talents, we're not as good a country as we can be. We might miss out on the next Mae Jemison or Ursula Burns or Serena Williams or Michelle Obama. We want everybody to be on the field. We can't afford to leave some folks off the field.

So we're going to have to close those economic gaps so that hard-working women of all races, and Black women in particular, can support families and strengthen communities and contribute to our country's success. So that's why my administration is investing in job training and apprenticeships, to help everybody, but particularly help more women earn better paying jobs, and particularly in nontraditional careers. It's why we're investing in getting more girls, and particularly girls of color, interested in STEM fields—math and science and engineering—and help more of them stay on track in school.

It's why we're going to continue to fight to eliminate the pay gap. Equal pay for equal work. It's an all-American idea. It's very simple. And that's why we're going to keep working to raise the minimum wage, because women disproportionately are the ones who are not getting paid what they're worth. That's why we're fighting to expand tax credits that help working parents make ends meet, closing tax loopholes for folks who don't need tax loopholes to pay for it. It's why we're expanding paid leave to employees of Federal contractors. And that's why Congress needs to expand paid leave for more hard-working Americans. It's good for our economy. It's the right thing to do. Nobody—no family should have to choose between taking care of a sick child or losing their job.

And just as an aside, what's not the right thing to do, what makes no sense at all, is Congress threatening to shut down the entire Federal Government if they can't shut down women's access to Planned Parenthood. That's not a good idea. Congress should be working on investing things that grow our economy and expand opportunity, and not get distracted and inflict the kind of self-inflicted wounds that we've seen before on our economy. So that's some of the things we need to do to help improve the economic standing of all women, to help all families feel more secure in a changing economy.

And before I go tonight, I also want to say something about a topic that's been on my mind for a while, another profound barrier to opportunity in too many communities, and that is our criminal justice system.

I spoke about this at length earlier this year at the NAACP, and I explained the long history of inequity in our criminal justice system. We all know the statistics. And this summer, because I wanted to highlight that there were human beings behind these statistics, I visited a prison in Oklahoma, the first President to ever visit a Federal prison. And I sat down with inmates, and I listened to their stories. And one of the things that struck me was the crushing burden their incarceration has placed not just on their prospects for the future, but also for their families, the women in their lives, children being raised without a father in the home; the crushing regret these men felt over the children that they had left behind.

Mass incarceration rips apart families. It hollows out neighborhoods. It perpetuates poverty. We understand that in many of our communities, they're underpoliced. The problem is not that we don't want active, effective police work. We want and admire and appreciate law enforcement. We want them in our communities. Crime hurts the African American community more than anybody. But we want to make sure that it's done well and it's done right and it's done fairly and it's done smart. And that's why, in the coming months, I'm going to be working with many in Congress and many in the CBC to try to make progress on reform legislation that addresses unjust sentencing laws and encourages diversion and prevention programs, catches our young people early and tries to put them on a better path, and then helps ex-offenders, after they've done their time, get on the right track. It's the right thing to do for America.

And although in these discussions a lot of my focus has been on African American men and the work we're doing with "My Brother's Keeper," we can't forget the impact that the system has on women as well. The incarceration rate for Black women is twice as high as the rate for White women. Many women in prison, you come to discover, have been victims of homelessness and domestic violence and, in some cases, human trafficking. They've got high rates of mental illness and substance abuse. And many have been sexually assaulted, both before they got to prison and then after they go to prison. And we don't often talk about how society treats Black women and girls before they end up in prison. They're suspended at higher rates than White boys and all other girls. And while boys face the school-to-prison pipeline, a lot of girls are facing a more sinister sexual-abuse-to-prison pipeline. Victims of early sexual abuse are more likely to fail in school, which can lead to sexual exploitation, which can lead to prison. So we're focusing on boys, but we're also investing in ways to change the odds for at-risk girls, to make sure that they are loved and valued, to give them a chance.

And that's why we have to make a collective effort to address violence and abuse against women in all of our communities. In every community, on every campus, we've got to be very clear: Women who have been victims of rape or domestic abuse, who need help, should know that they can count on society and on law enforcement to treat them with love and care and sensitivity and not skepticism.

I want to repeat, because somehow, this never shows up on Fox News—[*laughter*]—I want to repeat, because I've said it a lot, unwaveringly, all the time: Our law enforcement officers do outstanding work in an incredibly difficult and dangerous job. They put their lives on the line for our safety. We appreciate them, and we love them. That's why my Task Force on 21st-Century Policing made a set of recommendations that I want to see implemented to improve their safety, as well as to make sure that our criminal justice system is being applied fairly. Officers show uncommon bravery in our communities every single day. They deserve our respect. That includes women in law enforcement. We need more of you, by the way. We've got an outstanding chief law enforcement officer in our Attorney General, Loretta Lynch. We want all our young ladies to see what a great role model she is.

So I just want to repeat, because somehow, this never gets on the TV—[*laughter*]—there is no contradiction between us caring about our law enforcement officers and also making sure that our laws are applied fairly. Do not make this as an either-or proposition, this is a both-and proposition. We want to protect our police officers. We'll do a better job doing it if our communities can feel confident that they are being treated fairly. Hope I'm making that clear. [*Applause*] Hope I'm making that clear.

We need to make sure the laws are applied evenly. This is not a new problem. It's just that in recent months, in recent years, suddenly, folks have videos and body cameras and social media, and so it's opened our eyes to these incidents. And many of these incidents are subject to ongoing investigation, so I can't comment on every specific one. But we can't avoid these tough conversations altogether. That's not going to help our police officers, the vast majority who do the right thing every day, by just

pretending that these things aren't happening. That's not going to help build trust between them and the communities in which they serve.

So these are hard issues, but I'm confident we're going to move forward together for a system that is fairer and more just. We've got good people on both sides of the aisle that are working with law enforcement and local communities to find a better way forward. And as always, change will not happen overnight. It won't be easy. But if our history has taught us anything, it's taught us that when we come together, when we're working with a sense of purpose, when we are listening to one another, when we assume the best in each other rather than the worst, then change happens.

Like every parent, I can't help to see the world increasingly through my daughters' eyes. And on that day when we were celebrating that incredible march in Selma, I had Ms. Amelia's hand in one of my hands, but Michelle had Sasha's hand, and my mother-in-law had Malia's hand, and it was a chain across generations. And I thought about all those women who came before us, who risked everything for life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness, so often without notice, so often without fanfare. Their names never made the history books. All those women who cleaned somebody else's house or looked after somebody else's children, did somebody else's laundry, and then got home and did it again, and then went to church and cooked, and then they were marching and—[*applause*].

And because of them, Michelle could cross that bridge. And because of them, they brought them along, and Malia and Sasha can cross that bridge. And that tells me that if we follow their example, we're going to cross more bridges in the future. If we keep moving forward, hand in hand, God willing, my daughters' children will be able to cross that bridge in an America that's more free and more just and more prosperous than the one that we inherited. Your children will too.

Thank you, CBC. God bless you. God bless this country we love. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:40 p.m. at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to R. Donahue Peebles, chair of the board of directors, Congressional Black Caucus Foundation; 2015 Phoenix Award winners Juanita Abernathy, William Barber II, and Fred Gray; civil rights activists Diane Nash Bevel, Gloria Richardson Dandridge, Ruby Bridges Hall, Prince Melson Lee, and Myrlie Evers-Williams; former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton; former National Aeronautics and Space Administration astronaut Mae C. Jemison; Ursula M. Burns, chairman and chief executive officer, Xerox Corp.; and tennis player Serena J. Williams. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson.

Statement on the Death of Senior Adviser to the United States Chief Technology Officer Jacob T. Brewer
September 20, 2015

I am heartbroken at the tragic loss of one of my advisers, Jake Brewer. We set out to recruit the best of the best to join their Government and help us harness the power of technology and data to innovate new solutions for the 21st century. Simply put, Jake was one of the best. Armed with a brilliant mind, a big heart, and an insatiable desire to give back, Jake devoted his life to empowering people and making government work better for them. He worked to give citizens a louder voice in our society. He engaged our striving immigrants. He pushed for more transparency in our democracy. And he sought to expand opportunity for all. I've often said that today's younger generation is smarter, more determined, and more capable of making a difference than I was as a young man. Jake was proof of that. Michelle and I are praying for all of Jake's family and his many friends, most of all his wife Mary Katharine Ham, their daughter Georgia, and their growing family. They'll always have a family here at the White House.

Statement on the Observance of Yom Kippur
September 22, 2015

As Jews across America, Israel, and the world gather for the sacred service of Kol Nidre, Michelle and I extend our wishes for an easy fast to all those observing Yom Kippur. The Day of Atonement is a time for humility, reflection, and repentance, a chance to be honest with ourselves and one another about our shortcomings. Yet Yom Kippur is also a day of hope. Through our prayers and through our actions, as individuals and as a community, we can better bridge the realities of our world with the ideals and values we share. On this special day, may our common humanity unite us, and may our common faith in a better future inspire us to continue healing our world. *G'mar chatimah tovah.*

Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony for Pope Francis
September 23, 2015

President Obama. Good morning.

Audience members. Good morning!

President Obama. What a beautiful day the Lord has made. Holy Father, on behalf of Michelle and myself, welcome to the White House. I should explain that our backyard is not typically this crowded—[*laughter*]—but the size and spirit of today's gathering is just a small reflection of the deep devotion of some 70 million American Catholics. It reflects, as well, the way that your message of love and hope has inspired so many people across our Nation and around the world. So, on behalf of the American people, it is my great honor and privilege to welcome you to the United States of America.

Today we mark many firsts. Your Holiness, you've been celebrated as the first Pope from the Americas. This is your first visit to the United States. And you are also the first Pontiff to share an encyclical through a Twitter account. [*Laughter*]

Holy Father, your visit not only allows us, in some small way, to reciprocate the extraordinary hospitality that you extended to me at the Vatican last year. It also reveals how much all Americans, from every background and every faith, value the role that the Catholic Church plays in strengthening America. From my time working in impoverished neighborhoods with the Catholic Church in Chicago, to my travels as President, I have seen firsthand how, every single day, Catholic communities, priests, nuns, laity are feeding the hungry, healing the sick, sheltering the homeless, educating our children, and fortifying the faith that sustains so many.

And what is true in America is true around the world. From the busy streets of Buenos Aires to the remote villages in Kenya, Catholic organizations serve the poor, minister to prisoners, build schools, build homes, operate orphanages and hospitals. And just as the Church has stood with those struggling to break the chains of poverty, the Church so often has given voice and hope to those seeking to break the chains of violence and oppression.

And yet I believe the excitement around your visit, Holy Father, must be attributed not only to your role as Pope, but to your unique qualities as a person. In your humility, your embrace of simplicity, in the gentleness of your words, in the generosity of your spirit, we see a living example of Jesus' teachings, a leader whose moral authority comes not just through words, but also through deeds.

You call on all of us, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, to put the "least of these" at the center of our concerns. You remind us that in the eyes of God our measure as individuals, and our measure as a society, is not determined by wealth or power or station or celebrity, but by how well we hew to Scripture's call to lift up the poor and the marginalized, to stand up for justice and against inequality, and to ensure that every human being is able to live in

dignity, because we are all made in the image of God.

You remind us that "the Lord's most powerful message" is mercy. And that means welcoming the stranger with empathy and a truly open heart, from the refugee who flees war-torn lands to the immigrant who leaves home in search of a better life. It means showing compassion and love for the marginalized and the outcast, to those who have suffered, and those who have caused suffering and seek redemption. You remind us of the costs of war, particularly on the powerless and defenseless, and urge us toward the imperative of peace.

Holy Father, we are grateful for your invaluable support of our new beginning with the Cuban people, which holds out the promise of better relations between our countries, greater cooperation across our hemisphere, and a better life for the Cuban people. We thank you for your passionate voice against the deadly conflicts that ravage the lives of so many men, women, and children and your call for nations to resist the sirens of war and resolve disputes through diplomacy.

You remind us that people are only truly free when they can practice their faith freely. Here in the United States, we cherish religious liberty. It was the basis for so much of what brought us together. And here in the United States, we cherish our religious liberty, but around the world, at this very moment, children of God, including Christians, are targeted and even killed because of their faith. Believers are prevented from gathering at their places of worship. The faithful are imprisoned, and churches are destroyed. So we stand with you in defense of religious freedom and interfaith dialogue, knowing that people everywhere must be able to live out their faith free from fear and free from intimidation.

And, Holy Father, you remind us that we have a sacred obligation to protect our planet, God's magnificent gift to us. We support your call to all world leaders to support the communities most vulnerable to changing climate and to come together to preserve our precious world for future generations.

Your Holiness, in your words and deeds, you set a profound moral example. And in these gentle, but firm, reminders of our obligations to God and to one another, you are shaking us out of our complacency. All of us may, at times, experience discomfort when we contemplate the distance between how we lead our daily lives and what we know to be true, what we know to be right. But I believe such discomfort is a blessing, for it points to something better. You shake our conscience from slumber. You call on us to rejoice in Good News and give us confidence that we can come together in humility and service and pursue a world that is more loving, more just, and more free. Here at home and around the world, may our generation heed your call to "never remain on the sidelines of this march of living hope."

For that great gift of hope, Holy Father, we thank you and welcome you with joy and gratitude to the United States of America.

Pope Francis. Good morning.

Audience members. Good morning!

Pope Francis. Mr. President, I am deeply grateful for your welcome in the name of the all Americans. As a son of an immigrant family, I am happy to be a guest in this country, which was largely built by such families.

I look forward to these days of encounter and dialogue in which I hope to listen to and share many of the hopes and dreams of the American people. During my visit, I will have the honor of addressing Congress, where I hope, as a brother of this country, to offer words of encouragement to those called to guide the Nation's political future in fidelity to its founding principles. It will—I will also travel to Philadelphia for the eighth World Meeting of Families to celebrate and support the institutions of marriage and the family at this critical moment in the history of our civilization.

Mr. President, together with their fellow citizens, American Catholics are committed to building a society which is truly tolerant and inclusive, to safeguarding the rights of individuals and communities, and to rejecting every form of injustice, discrimination. With countless other people of good will, they are likewise

concerned that efforts to build a just and wisely ordered society respect their deepest concerns and the right to religious liberty. That freedom remains one of America's most precious possessions. And as my brothers, the United States bishops, have reminded us, all are called to be vigilant, precisely as good citizens, to preserve and defend that freedom from everything that would threaten or compromise it.

Mr. President, I'm finding it encouraging that you are proposing an initiative for reducing air pollution. Accepting the urgency, it seems clear to me also that climate change is a problem we can no longer be left to our future generation. When it comes to the care of our common home, we are living at a critical moment of history. We still have time to make the change needed to bring about a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change.

Such change demands on our part a serious and responsible recognition not only of the kind of the world we may be leaving to our children, but also to the millions of people living under a system which has overlooked them. Our common home has been part of this group of the excluded, which cries out to heaven and which today powerfully strikes our homes, our cities, our societies. To use a telling phrase of the Reverend Martin Luther King, we can say that we have defaulted on a promissory note, and now is the time to honor it.

We know by faith that the Creator does not abandon us; He never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us. Humanity has the ability to work together in building our common home. As Christians inspired by this certainty, we wish to commit ourselves to the conscious and responsible care of our common home.

Mr. President, the efforts which were recently made to mend broken relationships and to open new doors to cooperation within our human family represent positive steps along the path of reconciliation, justice, and freedom.

I would like all men and women of good will in this great Nation to support the efforts of the international community to protect the vulnerable in our world and to stimulate integral and inclusive models of development so that our brothers and sisters everywhere may know the blessings of peace and prosperity which God wills for all his children.

Mr. President, once again, I thank you for your welcome, and look—I look forward to these days in your country. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:32 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, where Pope Francis was accorded a formal welcome with full military honors.

Statement on the Death of Lawrence P. "Yogi" Berra
September 23, 2015

Yogi Berra was an American original: a Hall of Famer and humble veteran, prolific jokester and jovial prophet. He epitomized what it meant to be a sportsman and a citizen, with a big heart, competitive spirit, and a selfless desire to open baseball to everyone, no matter their background. Michelle and I offer our deepest condolences to his family, his friends, and his fans in New York and across the world.

Statement on the Observance of the Hajj and Eid al-Adha
September 23, 2015

As more than 2 million Muslims from around the world and across the United States mark the end of their holy pilgrimage of Hajj in Mecca, Michelle and I extend our warmest wishes to Muslims around the world celebrating Eid al-Adha.

This pilgrimage and Eid is about sacrifice, almsgiving, and equality. Thousands of Muslims around the world travel to Mecca and Medina, leaving behind all that is valuable and dressed in a simple white cloth, all standing shoulder-to-shoulder and equal before God. This experience signifies that no single person is more worthy than another. It is reminiscent of the principle upon which this country is built: "e pluribus unum"—out of many, one. Regardless of race, religion, and gender we are reminded that our rich diversity is what strengthens our Nation.

Eid is also a time to give food, shelter, and health services to those in need. Muslim Americans have always joined with other faith communities and entities to assist those suffering from hunger and conflict here at home and abroad. Once again, at a time of such desperate need, Muslim American organizations are among those at the forefront of attending to victims in this refugee crisis.

May the prayers for peace from those on pilgrimage as well as those of all beliefs be heard and answered. For all those celebrating, *Eid Mubarak* from my family to yours.

Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Unit Citation to Members of the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps

September 24, 2015

Last year, as Ebola spread in West Africa, I said that fighting this disease was more than a national security priority, it was a critical example of American leadership. These professionals from the U.S. Public Health Service were some of the Americans on the frontlines of that effort. And before you came in, I had the opportunity to award them with the Presidential Unit Citation.

Now, understand that this corps of public health professionals are on the front lines all the time. And when you think of some of the most difficult, challenging tragedies or public health challenges that we've experienced over the last several decades, these are the folks who've been there from the start. After 9/11, after hurricanes, after Sandy Hook, after Deepwater Horizon or the Boston Marathon bombing, they come in to help support, advise, and oftentimes provide direct treatment in some of the most difficult situations imaginable.

But this was a unique deployment by this unit. Like so many others, they signed up to leave their loved ones and head straight into the heart of the Ebola epidemic, understanding that there were significant risks that they themselves would be confronting as a consequence of helping others. Thanks to their skill, thanks to their courage and their dedication, they not only helped to keep the American people safe, they led a global response. It was not until they arrived that other countries were confident that they could send their own health workers in, because they knew that this outstanding group of individuals and health professionals were there on the job and would provide them the kind of support that could make their own efforts safe.

We're not yet at absolute zero when it comes to this Ebola epidemic that took place in West Africa, but we have turned the tide on the epidemic. The cases we now see are much more sporadic, and we have, as a consequence of the work that these individuals started, started to build the kind of public health infrastructure in many of these countries that they can prevent an outbreak in the future.

I want to thank Secretary Sylvia Burwell, Surgeon General Murthy, because they were critical in helping to move us to the next phase of the fight: transitioning from a military response to a civilian response. We're also now better prepared for disease outbreaks like Ebola here at home. Our health care professionals are better trained. Our screening processes have improved. Our hospitals are more capable with new protocols and new protective gear. None of this progress could have been made without America's public servants like these.

The troops who supported the global response, the CDC experts tracking cases, the HHS scientists testing vaccines, the USAID workers and PHS doctors and nurses who served directly in the field—all of these Americans, not just the ones in this room, but thousands of the Public Health Service individuals, the thousands more who helped support them, they made this progress possible.

His Holiness Pope Francis spoke today in Congress about the need for us to apply the Golden Rule and to have a sense of morality and common humanity at the center of our Government. Well, these are individuals who represent that spirit of that kind of selflessness that ends up helping the most vulnerable, the poorest, the people who are least capable of fending for themselves against invisible killers like Ebola. So I'm extraordinarily grateful to all of them.

It is a useful occasion for me to note that organizations like the Public Health Service's Commissioned Corps need support from Congress in order to continue to excel at their mission. And so I hope that Congress chooses to keep our Government open and operating so that heroes like this can keep working to extinguish disease and ignite hope wherever it is needed most. That's what America does. That's what these individuals represent. That's why I could not be more incredibly proud of them, but of the American people who support them.

Thank you. Good job. All right.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:46 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Memorandum on Establishment of the White House Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable

September 24, 2015

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Establishment of the White House Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to increase the availability of meaningful access to justice for individuals and families and thereby improve the outcomes of an array of Federal programs, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Policy. This Nation was founded in part on the promise of justice for all. Equal access to justice helps individuals and families receive health services, housing, education, and employment; enhances family stability and public safety; and secures the public's faith in the American justice system. Equal access to justice also advances the missions of an array of Federal programs, particularly those designed to lift Americans out of poverty or to keep them securely in the middle class. But gaps in the availability of legal aid—including legal representation, advice, community education, and self-help and technology tools—for America's poor and middle class threaten to undermine the promise of justice for all and constitute a crisis worthy of action by the Federal Government.

The majority of Americans who come to court do so without legal aid. They may be left by their economic circumstances to face life-altering events—such as losing a home or custody of children, or escaping domestic violence or elder abuse—on their own. More than 50 million Americans qualify for federally funded civil legal aid, but over half of those who seek assistance are turned away from legal aid organizations, which lack the funds and staff to meet the demand.

When people come into contact with or leave the criminal justice system, they are likely to face a range of legal issues. A victim of abuse may need a protective order, or a formerly incarcerated individual may need a driver's license reinstated in order to get a job. Access to legal aid can help put people on a path to self-sufficiency, lead to better outcomes in the civil and criminal justice systems, and

enhance the safety and strength of our communities. Increased legal resources in a community can also help courts process cases more effectively and more efficiently, saving time and money.

Federal programs that are designed to help the most vulnerable and underserved among us may more readily achieve their goals if they include legal aid among the range of services they provide.

By encouraging Federal departments and agencies to collaborate, share best practices, and consider the impact of legal services on the success of their programs, the Federal Government can enhance access to justice in our communities.

Sec. 2. Establishment. There is established the White House Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable (LAIR).

Sec. 3. Membership. (a) The Attorney General and the Director of the Domestic Policy Council, or their designees, shall serve as the Co-Chairs of LAIR, which shall also include a representative from each of the following executive departments, agencies, and offices:

(i) the Department of State;
(ii) the Department of the Treasury;
(iii) the Department of Justice;
(iv) the Department of the Interior;
(v) the Department of Agriculture;
(vi) the Department of Labor;
(vii) the Department of Health and Human Services;
(viii) the Department of Housing and Urban Development;
(ix) the Department of Education;
(x) the Department of Veterans Affairs;
(xi) the Department of Homeland Security;
(xii) the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission;
(xiii) the Corporation for National and Community Service;
(xiv) the Office of Management and Budget;
(xv) the United States Agency for International Development;
(xvi) the Administrative Conference of the United States;
(xvii) the National Science Foundation; and
(xviii) such other executive departments, agencies, and offices as the Co-Chairs may, from time to time, designate.

(b) The Co-Chairs shall invite the participation of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Federal Trade Commission, Legal Services Corporation, and Social Security Administration, to the extent consistent with their respective statutory authorities and legal obligations.

Sec. 4. Mission and Function. (a) The LAIR shall work across executive departments, agencies, and offices to:

(i) improve coordination among Federal programs that help the vulnerable and underserved, so that those programs are more efficient and produce better outcomes by including, where appropriate, legal services among the range of supportive services provided;
(ii) increase the availability of meaningful access to justice for individuals and families, regardless of wealth or status;
(iii) develop policy recommendations that improve access to justice in Federal, State, local, tribal, and international jurisdictions;
(iv) assist the United States with implementation of Goal 16 of the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and
(v) advance relevant evidence-based research, data collection, and analysis of civil legal aid and indigent defense, and promulgate best practices to support the activities detailed in section 4(a)(i)–(iv).

(b) The LAIR shall report annually to the President on its success in achieving its mission, consistent with the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The report shall include data from participating members on the deployment of Federal resources that foster LAIR's mission.

Sec. 5. Administration. (a) The LAIR shall hold meetings at least three times a year and

engage with Federal, State, local, tribal, and international officials, technical advisors, and nongovernmental organizations, among others, as necessary to carry out its mission.

(b) The Director of the Office for Access to Justice in the Department of Justice, or his or her designee, shall serve as Executive Director of LAIR and shall, as directed by the Co-Chairs, convene regular meetings of LAIR and supervise its work. The Office for Access to Justice staff shall serve as the staff of LAIR.

(c) The Department of Justice shall, to the extent permitted by law and subject to the availability of appropriations, provide administrative services, funds, facilities, staff, equipment, and other support services as may be necessary for LAIR to carry out its mission.

(d) The LAIR members are encouraged to provide support, including by detailing personnel, to LAIR.

(e) Members of LAIR shall serve without any additional compensation for their work.

Sec. 6. General Provisions. (a) This memorandum shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(b) Nothing in this memorandum shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

(i) the authority granted by law to an executive department, agency, or the head thereof; or

(ii) the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(c) This memorandum is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony for President Xi Jinping of China
September 25, 2015

President Obama. Good morning.

Audience members. Good morning.

President Obama. *Ni hao*.

Audience members. *Ni hao*.

President Obama. President Xi, Madame Peng, members of the Chinese delegation: On behalf of Michelle and myself, welcome to the White House. And on behalf of the American people, welcome to the United States.

Across more than two centuries, Americans and Chinese have traded together. Chinese immigrants helped build our railroads and our great cities. The United States is enriched by millions of proud Chinese Americans, including those who join us here this morning. So this visit reflects a history of friendship and cooperation between our two great peoples.

This is also an opportunity for Michelle and me to reciprocate the hospitality shown to us during our visits to China. And Michelle, our daughters, and my mother-in-law were warmly welcomed last year as they traveled across the country, as was I when I made a state visit to Beijing. And I'm told that news about Michelle's trip got some 1 billion views online. [*Laughter*] President Xi, I believe that we are both accustomed to being outshone by our dynamic spouses. [*Laughter*]

As I have said many times, the United States welcomes the rise of a China that is stable, prosperous and peaceful, because that benefits us all. Our work together—to increase our trade, boost the global economy, fight climate change, and prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon—shows that when the United States and China work together, it makes our nations and the world more prosperous and more secure.

Even as our nations cooperate, I believe—and I know you agree—that we must address

our differences candidly. The United States will always speak out on behalf of fundamental truths. We believe that nations are more successful and the world makes more progress when our companies compete on a level playing field, when disputes are resolved peacefully, and when the universal human rights of all people are upheld.

During our multiple visits together, I believe that we have made significant progress in enhancing understanding between our two nations and laying the foundation for continued cooperation. President Xi, you've spoken of your vision of China's peaceful development. And during my visit to Beijing last year, you said that there were "wide areas" where our two nations "need to and can cooperate with each other." And I fully agree.

In fact, I believe that our two great nations, if we work together, have an unmatched ability to shape the course of the century ahead. And, President Xi, Madame Peng, members of the Chinese delegation: In that spirit, with the eyes and hopes of the world upon us, welcome to the United States of America.

Xiè xie.

President Xi. Mr. President, Mrs. Obama, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends: In this golden season of autumn, my wife and I are very pleased to come to the beautiful city of Washington, DC.

At the outset, I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for your kind invitation and the gracious hospitality. I also wish to convey to the American people the warm regards and the best wishes of over 1.3 billion Chinese people.

China and the United States are both great nations. And the Chinese and American people are two great peoples. Since we established diplomatic relations 36 years ago, China-U.S. relations have forged ahead despite twists and turns and have made historic advances.

At our Sunnylands meeting in the summer of 2013, President Obama and I made the strategic decision of building a new model of major-country relations. More than 2 years have passed, and we have made important progress in various areas of exchange and cooperation. This has been welcomed by people of our two countries and the world at large.

Working together, China and the United States can make a greater impact than our individual efforts. To grow our relationship under the new conditions, we must adapt to the changing times and seize the positive momentum. I come to the United States this time to promote peace and advance cooperation. We would like to work with the U.S. side to make great advances in our relationship and deliver more benefits to people of our two countries and the whole world.

We must uphold the right direction of building a new model of major-country relations; make sure our relationship is defined by peace, respect, and cooperation; and see to it that it keeps moving forward on the sound track of steady growth. We must enhance strategic trust and mutual understanding, respect each other's interests and concerns, be broadminded about our differences and disagreements, and strengthen our people's confidence in China-U.S. friendship and cooperation.

We must pursue win-win cooperation, update the model and broaden the scope of our collaboration, and improve the well-being of people of our two countries and the world through concrete actions and outcomes of cooperation. We must enhance friendship and promote interactions between our people, encourage our two societies to meet each other halfway, and cement the social foundation of China-U.S. relations.

We must promote world peace and development, improve coordination on major international and regional issues, make concerted efforts to address global challenges, and work with other nations to build a better world.

Thirty years ago, during my first visit to the United States, I was hosted by an American family in Muscatine, Iowa. My hosts were so warm, sincere, and friendly. We had cordial conversations, and we hugged tightly when we had to say goodbye. To this day, those moments are still fresh in my memory.

Three years ago, I went back to Muscatine and had a reunion with my old friends there. They said to me, friendship is a big business.

Well, from these old friends and from many other American friends, I can feel firsthand the genuine friendship between the Chinese and American people. We do share each other's feelings. And this gives me every confidence about the future of our relations.

Mr. President, and Mrs. Obama, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, success comes with dedicated efforts. China-U.S. relations have reached a new starting point in the 21st century. For further growth of our relations, we have no choice but to seek win-win cooperation. Let us work hand-in-hand with great resolve to write a new chapter in China-U.S. relations.

Xiè xiè.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:22 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, where President Xi was accorded a formal welcome with full military honors. In his remarks, President Obama referred to Peng Liyuan, wife of President Xi. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson. President Xi referred to Muscatine, IA, residents Roger and Sarah Lande, who hosted President Xi during his 2012 visit to the U.S. as Vice President, and Thomas and Eleanor Dvorchak, who hosted President Xi during his 1985 visit as a Hebei Province official. President Xi spoke in Chinese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

The President's News Conference With President Xi Jinping of China
September 25, 2015

President Obama. Good afternoon, everybody. Please have a seat.

I want to once again welcome President Xi back to the White House. We first hosted him here 3 years ago when he was Vice President. So this is our sixth meeting. As a result of our efforts, our two nations are working together more closely across a broader range of critical issues, and our cooperation is delivering results, for both our nations and the world.

Now, since I took office, American exports to China have nearly doubled and now support nearly 1 million American jobs. Chinese investment in the United States helps support jobs across our country. We partner to address global challenges, whether it's promoting nuclear security, combating piracy off the Horn of Africa, encouraging development and reconciliation in Afghanistan, and helping to end the Ebola epidemic in West Africa.

The historic climate change announcements that we made last year in Beijing have encouraged other countries to step up as well, increasing the prospects for a stronger global agreement this year. And as a member of the P5-plus-1, China was critical to both the sanctions regime that brought Iran to the negotiating table and to the talks that produced the comprehensive deal to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

So greater prosperity and greater security, that's what American and Chinese cooperation can deliver. And that's why I want to say again, the United States welcomes the rise of a China that is peaceful, stable, prosperous, and a responsible player in global affairs. And I'm committed to expanding our cooperation, even as we address disagreements candidly and constructively. That's what President Xi and I have done on this visit, during our working dinner last night and our meetings today.

Let me mention some specifics. First, with respect to our economic relationship, we agreed to step up our work toward a high-standard bilateral investment treaty that would help level the playing field for American companies. We've committed ourselves to a set of principles for trade in information technologies, including protection of innovation and intellectual property. President Xi discussed his commitment to accelerate market reforms, avoid devaluing China's currency, and have China play a greater role in upholding the rules-based system that underpins the global economy, all of which are steps we very much support.

I raised once again our very serious concerns about growing cyber threats to American companies and American citizens. I indicated that it has to stop. The United States

Government does not engage in cyber economic espionage for commercial gain. And today I can announce that our two countries have reached a common understanding on the way forward. We've agreed that neither the U.S. or the Chinese Government will conduct or knowingly support cyber-enabled theft of intellectual property, including trade secrets or other confidential business information for commercial advantage. In addition, we'll work together, and with other nations, to promote international rules of the road for appropriate conduct in cyberspace.

So this is progress. But I have to insist that our work is not yet done. I believe we can expand our cooperation in this area, even as the United States will continue to use all of the tools at our disposal to protect American companies, citizens, and interests.

Second, I'm pleased that we're building on last year's climate commitments. Last month, I issued our Clean Power Plan to help reduce America's carbon emissions. Today I want to commend China for announcing that it will begin a national, market-based cap-and-trade system to limit emissions from some of its largest sectors. Last year, I announced our pledge of $3 billion to the Green Climate Fund to help developing nations deal with climate change. Today I welcome China's major commitment of climate finance for the most vulnerable countries as well.

Our two countries are also putting forward our common vision for the ambitious climate change agreements that we seek in Paris. When the world's two largest economies, energy consumers, and carbon emitters come together like this, then there's no reason for other countries—whether developed or developing—to not do so as well. And so this is another major step towards the global agreement the world needs to reach in 2 months' time.

Third, with respect to security in the Asia-Pacific, we agreed to new channels of communication to reduce the risks of miscalculations between our militaries. The United States and China have reaffirmed our commitment to the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner. We demand the full implementation of all relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions, and we will not accept North Korea as a nuclear weapons state.

We did have candid discussions on the East and South China Seas, and I reiterated the right of all countries to freedom of navigation and overflight and to unimpeded commerce. As such, I indicated that the United States will continue to sail, fly, and operate anywhere that international law allows. I conveyed to President Xi our significant concerns over land reclamation, construction, and the militarization of disputed areas, which makes it harder for countries in the region to resolve disagreements peacefully. And I encouraged a resolution between claimants in these areas. We are not a claimant; we just want to make sure that the rules of the road are upheld.

I reiterated my strong commitment as well to our "one China" policy based on the three joint communiqués and the Taiwan Relations Act.

Fourth, we've agreed to do more to promote international security. At the United Nations in the coming days, the U.S. and China will bring countries together to promote development in Afghanistan, and we'll work with our many partners to strengthen international peacekeeping. We agree that all parties, including Iran, need to fully implement the nuclear deal and that U.N. Security Council resolutions need to be fully enforced.

For the first time, the U.S. and China will also formally partner to promote global development. Building on our efforts against Ebola, we'll work to strengthen global health security. We'll expand our joint efforts on humanitarian assistance, disaster response, agricultural development, and food security. And given China's success in lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty, which is one of the most remarkable achievements in human history, we will help rally the world this weekend around new development goals, including our goal to end extreme poverty.

Fifth, we had a frank discussion about human rights, as we have in the past. And I again affirmed America's unwavering support for the

human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people, including freedom of assembly and expression, freedom of the press, and freedom of religion. And I expressed in candid terms our strong view that preventing journalists, lawyers, NGOs, and civil society groups from operating freely or closing churches and denying ethnic minorities equal treatment are all problematic in our view and actually prevent China and its people from realizing its full potential.

Obviously, we recognize that there are real differences there. And President Xi shared his views in terms of how he can move forward in a step-by-step way that preserves Chinese unity. So we expect that we're going to continue to consult in these areas.

Even as we recognize Tibet as part of the People's Republic of China, we continue to encourage Chinese authorities to preserve the religious and cultural identity of the Tibetan people and to engage the Dalai Lama or his representatives.

Finally, we're taking more steps to expand the connections between our two peoples. We launch a new initiative to boost tourism between our countries in the coming months. And just as children across China learn English, we're starting a new initiative called "One Million Strong" to encourage 1 million American students to learn Mandarin Chinese over the next 5 years. Vice President Biden pointed out that two of his children are already on track—two of his grandchildren, actually. After all, if our countries are going to do more together around the world, then speaking each other's language, truly understanding each other, is a good place to start.

So, overall, we've had an extremely productive meeting. The particular work that has been done by our teams shows the extraordinary progress that we can make when we're working together. The candid conversations between President Xi and myself about areas of disagreement help us to understand each other better, to avoid misunderstandings or miscalculations, and pave the way potentially for further progress in those areas.

And, President Xi, I want to thank you again for expanding your commitment to cooperation between our nations. I believe that it's another reminder that as we work to narrow our differences, we can continue to advance our mutual interests for the benefit not only of our two peoples, but for the benefit of the world.

Thank you very much.

President Xi. President Obama, dear friends from the press, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends: Good morning. It's a great pleasure for me to meet with all of you together with President Obama. Let me begin by thanking, again, President Obama and the U.S. Government for the gracious hospitality and thoughtful arrangements and warm reception accorded to me and the Chinese delegation. I also want to thank the American people for the warm welcome.

Yesterday and today, President Obama and I have had in-depth discussions on our respective domestic and foreign policies, important topics in bilateral relations, international and regional situation. Our meetings are constructive and productive, and we have reached extensive and important consensus.

During the discussions, President Obama shared with me the domestic agenda and foreign policy priorities that he has been working on. And I congratulated him on the progress that he has made in those areas. I appreciate President Obama's reaffirmation to me that the United States welcomes the rise of a peaceful, stable, and prosperous China. It supports China to play a bigger role in the international arena. And the United States supports China's reform at opening up.

I indicated to President Obama that China is making all-around efforts to deepen comprehensive reform, to build law-based governance, to enforce strict party discipline, so as to achieve the grand goal of building a society of initial prosperity in all respects. The reform at opening up China will not stop.

China is firmly committed to the path of peaceful development. It is committed to growing friendship and cooperative relations with all countries in the world. To work with the United States to build the new model of major-country relationship—without conflicts, without confrontation, with mutual respect

and win-win cooperation—is a priority in China's foreign policy.

We have spoken highly of the important progress made in China-U.S. relations since the Sunnyland summit in 2013. And we have agreed to follow the consensus, expand the practical cooperation in various areas at the bilateral, regional, and global level, and manage differences and sensitive issues in constructive manner, and to advance the new model of major-country relationship between China and the United States.

We have agreed to deepen the practical cooperation in various areas at the bilateral scope. This includes—we have agreed to vigorously push forward the bilateral investment treaty negotiation, speed up the pace of the work so as to achieve a high-standard and balanced agreement.

We will expand a mutually beneficial cooperation in energy, environmental protection, science and technology, aviation, infrastructure, agriculture, health, and other areas. The two governments and relevant agencies have signed many cooperation agreements, and our businesses have signed a series of commercial contract.

China and the United States are highly complementary economically, and there is huge potential for further cooperation. For the United States to recognize China's market economy status and ease export control on civilian high-tech items, it will help expand the mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries.

We have also had in-depth discussion on the current international, economic, and financial situation. We have agreed to step up macroeconomic policy coordination and jointly promote global economic growth and financial stability. To this end, we have established the mechanism on regular phone conversation on economic affairs between China and the United States, which will be led by Vice Premier Wang Yang of China and Secretary of Treasury Jacob Lew. They will stay in close communication on respective and global major economic issues.

We will also step up cooperation within G–20, the World Bank, IMF, and other multilateral mechanisms. I appreciate the U.S. supporting including the RMB into the IMF Special Drawing Rights when certain standards of the IMF are met. And I also appreciate the U.S. commitment to implement the IMF quota and governance structure reform plan adopted at the G–20 summit in 2010 at an early date.

We have fully affirmed the new progress made in the confidence-building mechanisms between the two militaries. We have agreed to step up exchanges in policy dialogues between the two militaries at all levels, hold more joint exercises and training. We believe that terrorism is the common enemy of mankind, and we have agreed to step up multilateral and bilateral counterterrorism cooperation. We have decided to increase communication and cooperation on counterpiracy, humanitarian assistance and disaster reduction, and international peacekeeping operation and also anticooperation—law enforcement cooperation to jointly fight against all kinds of transnational corruption crimes.

We have in-depth discussion on the situation of the Asia-Pacific. And we believe that China and the United States have extensive common interests in this region, and we should continue to deepen dialogue and cooperation on regional affairs and work together to promote active interactions and inclusive cooperation in the Asia-Pacific and work with countries in the Asia-Pacific to promote peace, stability, and prosperity in this region.

China is committed to the path of peaceful development and a neighboring foreign policy characterized by good neighborliness and partnership with our neighbors. Islands in the South China Sea since ancient times are China's territory. We have the right to uphold our own territorial sovereignty and lawful and legitimate maritime rights and interests. We are committed to maintaining peace and stability in the South China Sea, managing differences and disputes through dialogue, and addressing disputes through negotiation, consultation, and

peaceful manner, and exploring ways to achieve mutual benefit through cooperation.

We're committed to respecting and upholding the freedom of navigation and overflight that countries enjoy according to international law. Relevant construction activities that China are undertaking in the islands of South—Nansha Islands do not target or impact any country, and China does not intend to pursue militarization.

China and the United States have a lot of common interests on the issue of South China Sea. We both support peace and stability of the South China Sea. The countries directly involved should address their dispute through negotiation, consultation, and in peaceful means. And we support freedom of navigation and overflight of countries according to international law and the management of differences through dialogue and full and effective implementation of DOC and an early conclusion of the consultation on COC based on consensus building. We have agreed to maintain constructive communication on relevant issues.

China and the United States are two major cyber countries, and we should strengthen dialogue and cooperation. Confrontation and friction are not the right choice for both sides. During my visit, the competent authorities of both countries have reached important consensus on joint fight against cyber crimes. Both sides agree to step up crime cases, investigation assistance, and information sharing. And both government will not engage in or knowingly support online theft of intellectual properties. And we will explore the formulation of appropriate state behavior norms of the cyberspace. And we will establish a high-level joint dialogue mechanism on the fight against cyber crimes and related issues and to establish hotline links.

Democracy and human rights are the common pursuit of mankind. At the same time, we must recognize that countries have different historical processes and realities, that we need to respect people of all countries in the rights to choose their own development path independently.

The Chinese people are seeking to realize the great renewal of the Chinese nation, which is the Chinese history. This process in essence is a process to achieve social equity and justice and advancing human rights. China stands ready to, in the spirit of equality and mutual respect, conduct human rights dialogue with the United States, expand consensus, reduce differences, learn from each other, and progress together.

We have decided to continue to work together to tackle global challenges and provide more public goods for the international community. We again issued a joint announcement on climate change. We have agreed to expand bilateral, practical cooperation, strengthen coordination in multilateral negotiation, and work together to push the Paris Climate Change Conference to produce important progress.

We have signed China-U.S. development cooperation MOU, and we have agreed to expand trilateral cooperation in Asia, Africa, and other regions in terms of food security, public health system establishment, emergency response, and disaster reduction. And we will maintain communication and coordination in implementing the post-2015 development agenda, promote a more equitable and balanced global development partnership, and help developing countries to achieve common development.

We have agreed to firmly uphold the international nuclear nonproliferation regime. President Obama and I welcome the Comprehensive Joint Plan of Action reached by relevant parties regarding the Iranian nuclear issue. We reaffirmed that all relevant parties should undertake to implement the agreement fully and work together to implement all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

We reaffirm our commitment to realize the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in peaceful way. And we oppose any action that might cause tension in the Korean Peninsula or violate U.N. Security Council resolution. We believe that the September the 19th joint statement of the six-party talks and relevant U.N. Security Council

reolutions should be implemented in full and all relevant parties should work together to firmly advance the denuclearization process of the Korean Peninsula and maintain peace and stability so as to achieve enduring peace and stability in Northeast Asia.

The friendship between the two peoples is the most reliable foundation for long-term and stable development of China-U.S. relations, and we should endeavor to solidify this important foundation. We have decided to make 2016 a year of tourism for China and the United States. In the next 3 years, we will fund a total of 50,000 students to study in each other's countries. We also welcome the United States decision to extend the 100,000 Strong initiative from universities to elementary and secondary schools, and by 2020, 1 million American students will learn Mandarin. The door of friendship of China will continue to be open to the American people. I also hope that the Chinese people could come to the United States for holidays or visits more easily and conveniently.

Mr. President, with 36 years of development, the interests of China and the United States are deeply interconnected, and we have greater responsibilities for world peace and human progress. There are broader areas that the two sides should and can work together. The Chinese side stands ready to work with the United States to uphold a spirit of perseverance and advance bilateral relations to seek further progress to the better benefits of the Chinese and American people and the people of—in the world.

Thank you.

President Obama. Okay, we're going to take a few questions. We're going to start with Margaret Talev of Bloomberg.

Cybersecurity/Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner's Decision To Resign From Congress

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Obama. Yes.

Q. President Obama and President Xi, I'd like to talk to you about cyber. If I am an American business and I'm being hacked by Chinese pirates who are trying to steal my intellectual property, what firm assurances can you give us today that things are going to get better and when?

President Obama, are you satisfied enough about the steps that China is taking to hold off on imposing any new sanctions to this end? Or what do you still need to see?

And, President Xi, could we expect prosecutions of Chinese people and organizations who have hacked American businesses? And if the U.S. did sanction anyone in China, would you respond with sanctions?

Also, everyone will kill me if I don't ask: What is your reaction to House Speaker John Boehner's decision to resign? [*Laughter*] Will this make life better or worse for you? Are you concerned it will make it more difficult to avoid a Government shutdown or raise the debt limit? And do you think Boehner could just waive the rules and get immigration reform through before he leaves? Thank you.

President Obama. I'll take them in order. With respect to cyber, this has been a serious discussion between myself and President Xi since we first met in Sunnyland. And the good news, from my perspective, is, is that in the lead-up to and then finalized during our meetings here today, we have, I think, made significant progress in agreeing to how our law enforcement and investigators are going to work together, how we're going to exchange information, how we are going to go after individuals or entities who are engaging in cyber crimes or cyber attacks. And we have jointly affirmed the principle that governments don't engage in cyber espionage for commercial gain against companies. That all I consider to be progress.

What I've said to President Xi and what I'd say to the American people is, the question now is, are words followed by actions? And we will be watching carefully to make an assessment as to whether progress has been made in this area.

With respect to the various tools that we have to go after those who are attacking our companies or trying to extract trade secrets or data, we have traditional law enforcement tools, but, as I indicated a while back, through executive action, I've also instituted the ability

to impose sanctions on individuals or entities where we have proof that they've gone after U.S. companies or U.S. persons.

And we did not, at our level, have specific discussions of specific cases. But I did indicate to President Xi that we will apply those and whatever other tools we have in our toolkit to go after cyber criminals, either retrospectively or prospectively. Those are tools generally that were—that are not directed at governments; they are directed at entities or individuals that we can identify. And they're not unique to China. Those are tools that we're going to be using for cyber criminals around the world.

And President Xi, during these discussions, indicated to me that, with 1.3 billion people, he can't guarantee the behavior of every single person on Chinese soil, which I completely understand. I can't guarantee the actions of every single American. What I can guarantee, though, and what I'm hoping President Xi will show me, is that we are not sponsoring these activities, and that when it comes to our attention that nongovernmental entities or individuals are engaging in this stuff, that we take it seriously and we're cooperating to enforce the law.

The last point I'll make on the cyber issue: Because this is a global problem and because, unlike some of the other areas of international cooperation, the rules in this area are not well developed, I think it's going to very important for the United States and China, working with other nations and the United Nations and other—and the private sector, to start developing an architecture to govern behavior in cyberspace that is enforceable and clear. It doesn't mean that we're going to prevent every cyber crime, but it does start to serve as a template whereby countries know what the rules are, they're held accountable, and we're able to jointly go after nonstate actors in this area.

On John Boehner, I just heard the news as I was coming out of the meeting here, so it took me by surprise. And I took the time prior to this press conference to call John directly and talk to him.

John Boehner is a good man. He is a patriot. He cares deeply about the House, an institution in which he served for a long time. He cares about his constituents, and he cares about America. We have obviously had a lot of disagreements, and politically, we're at different ends of the spectrum. But I will tell you, he has always conducted himself with courtesy and civility with me. He has kept his word when he made a commitment. He is somebody who has been gracious.

And I think maybe most importantly, he's somebody who understands that in government, in governance, you don't get a hundred percent of what you want, but you have to work with people who you disagree with—sometimes strongly—in order to do the people's business.

I'm not going to prejudge who the next Speaker will be. That's something that will have to be worked through in the House. And I will certainly reach out immediately to whoever is the new Speaker to see what his or her ideas are and how we can make progress in the important issues that America faces.

The one thing I will say is that my hope is, there's a recognition on the part of the next Speaker—something I think John understood, even though at times, it was challenging to bring his caucus along—that we can have significant differences on issues, but that doesn't mean you shut down the Government. That doesn't mean you risk the full faith and credit of the United States. You don't invite potential financial crises. You build roads and pass transportation bills. And you do the basic work of governance that ensures that our military is operating and that our national parks are open and that our kids are learning.

And there's no weakness in that. There's—that's what government is in our democracy. You don't get what you want a hundred percent of the time. And so sometimes, you take half a loaf; sometimes, you take a quarter loaf. And that's certainly something that I've learned here in this office.

So I'm looking forward to working with the next Speaker. In the meantime, John is not going to leave for another 30 days, so hopefully, he feels like getting as much stuff done as he

possibly can. And I'll certainly be looking forward to working with him on that. All right?

President Xi. Madam reporter has raised the cybersecurity issue. Indeed, at current, for the international community and for China and the United States, this is an issue all attach great importance to. With President Obama and I have on many occasions—and this is a long history—have exchange of views on this. I think it's fair to say we've reached a lot of consensus on cybersecurity, including some new consensus.

Overall, the United States is the strongest country in terms of cyberstrength. China is the world's biggest cyber country in terms of the number of web users. We have more than 600 million of netizens. Our two sides should cooperate because cooperation will benefit both and confrontation will lead to losses on both sides. We are entirely able to carry out government department and expert levels of dialogue and exchanges to strengthen our cooperation in many respects and turn the cybersecurity between the two countries into a new growth source, rather than a point of confrontation between the two sides.

China strongly opposes and combats the theft of commercial secrets and other kinds of hacking attacks. The U.S. side, if has concerns in this respect, we can, through the existing channels, express those concerns. The Chinese side will take seriously the U.S. provision of any information. Now, we have already, and in the future, we will still, through the law enforcement authorities, maintain communication and coordination on this matter and appropriately address them.

So, all in all, we have broad, common interests in the field of the cyber. But we need to strengthen cooperation and avoid leading to confrontation. And nor should we politicize this issue. During my current visit, I think it's fair to say that the two sides, concerning combating cyber crimes, have reached a lot of consensus. Going forward, we need to, at an early date, reach further agreement on them and further put them on the ground.

Thank you.

Now I would like to propose for China's Central Television reporter—[*inaudible*]—to raise a question.

China-U.S. Relations

Q. Thank you, Mr. President Xi. I have a question for President Obama. I have noticed that last night, during a meeting with President Xi Jinping, as well as at the welcoming ceremony this morning and the just recently made remarks, you've indicated that the U.S. welcomes the rise of a peace, stable, and prosperous China and supports the U.S.—the China to play a bigger role on the international stage. Would you please elaborate? That for your office so far, what have you done to enable the reaching this target? And we are more interested that for the remainder of the office, what will you do still further for to reach that goal? Thank you.

President Obama. Well, first of all, I think that the United States has provided a platform in the post–World War II era in which the Asia region has been able to stabilize and the conditions in which China was able to grow so rapidly were maintained. And we're very proud of the work that we did after World War II to help rebuild both Asia and Europe, to help establish the international norms and rules that facilitated growing global trade and connections and travel and interactions and to help maintain the peace.

Since I've been President, my goal has been to consistently engage with China in a way that is constructive to manage our differences and to maximize opportunities for cooperation. And I've repeatedly said that I believe it is in the interests of the United States to see China grow, to pull people out of poverty, to expand its markets, because a successful and stable and peaceful China can then serve as an effective partner with us on a range of international challenges.

Last night, during our discussions, I mentioned to President Xi that as powerful as the United States is, the nature of the biggest challenges we face—things like climate change or terrorism or pandemic or refugees—those are not issues that any one nation alone can solve.

And we recognize, because of our strength and the size of our economy and the excellence of our military, that we can play a special role and carry a larger burden, but we can't do it alone. China, despite its size, still has development challenges of its own, so it can't solve these problems alone. We've got to work together. We've got to cooperate.

And I think that can happen as long as we continue to recognize that there's a difference between friendly competition, which we have with some of our closest friends and allies like Great Britain or Germany, and competition that tilts the playing field unfairly in one direction or another. And that's typically where tensions between our countries arise, is our desire to uphold international norms and rules, even as we recognize that we need to update some of these international institutions to reflect China's growth and strength and power.

So President Xi mentioned IMF reform, quota reform. That's an area where we fully support and want to implement a greater voice and vote for China in that institution, reflective of its strength. The same will be true when we go up to the United Nations on peacekeeping initiatives. China is able to project its capabilities in a way that can be extremely helpful in reducing conflict.

And in all of those issues, as well as education, science, technology, we think that the opportunities for cooperation are there as long as there's reciprocity, transparency, and fairness in the relationship.

And what I have said in the past to President Xi is, is that given China's size, we recognize there's still a lot of development to be done and a lot of poverty inside of China, but we can't treat China as if it's still a very poor, developing country, as it might have been 50 years ago. It is now a powerhouse. And that means it's got responsibilities and expectations in terms of helping to uphold international rules that might not have existed before.

And that is something China should welcome. That's part of the deal of being on the world stage when you're a big country, is you've got more to do. My gray hair testifies to that. [*Laughter*]

Julie Davis [New York Times].

Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner's Decision To Resign From Congress/Bipartisanship/Federal Budget/Pope Francis

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Obama. Yes.

Q. I know you said you didn't want to prejudge the next Speaker. But I wonder if you could tell us what Speaker Boehner's resignation today tells you about the Republican Party and your ability to work with Congress in the remainder of your term, particularly since it's coming at a time when you're trying to negotiate to avert a Government shutdown. Does this make that easier or harder? And do you think that you'll be able to move forward with the Congress on priorities like the budget, Planned Parenthood, and immigration that you weren't able to address with Speaker Boehner in his position?

And for President Xi, you've experienced an economic downturn in your country with the stock market crisis. And investors, globally, have been concerned about some of the actions you've taken to intervene in the stock market and with the currency exchange rate. I wonder if you could say what you told President Obama, or what you can say today, to restore confidence that these interventions will not have spillover effects into the global economy in the future. Thank you.

President Obama. Well, Julie, I meant what I said. I'm not going to prejudge who—how I'll be able to work with the next Speaker because I don't know who the next Speaker is. And I suspect that there's going to be a lot of debate inside the Republican caucus about who they want to lead them and in what direction.

It's not as if there's been a multitude of areas where the House Republican caucus has sought cooperation previously, so I don't necessarily think that there's going to be a big shift. I do think that Speaker Boehner sometimes had a tough position because there were Members in his caucus who saw compromise of any sort as weakness or betrayal. And when you have divided Government, when you have a democracy, compromise is necessary. And I

think Speaker Boehner sometimes had difficulty persuading members of his caucus of that.

Hopefully, they've learned some lessons from 2011, the last time that they sought to introduce a nonbudget item into the budget discussions. At that time it was Obamacare, and they were going to shut down the Government for that purpose. It ended up really hurting the economy, slowing it down, and caused a lot of hardship and a lot of problems for a lot of people.

Because it turns out, actually, Government provides a lot of vital services. Our military provides us protection. Our agencies keep our air clean and our water clean. And our people every single day are helping to respond to emergencies and helping families get Social Security checks and helping them deal with an ailing parent. And when you insist that unless I get my way on this one particular issue, I'm going to shut down all those services—and by the way, leave a whole lot of really hard-working people without paychecks—that doesn't just hurt the economy, that hurts—in the abstract, it hurts particular families. And as I recall, it wasn't particularly good for the reputation of the Republican Party either.

So, hopefully, some lessons will be drawn there. I expect we'll continue to have significant fights around issues like Planned Parenthood, and significant fights around issues like immigration. But perhaps the visit by the Holy Father to Congress may have changed hearts and minds. I know that Speaker Boehner was deeply moved by his encounter with Pope Francis. I want to congratulate him, by the way, on facilitating that historic visit. I know it meant a lot to John and his family.

And I would just ask Members to really reflect on what His Holiness said, not in the particulars, but in the general proposition that we should be open to each other, we should not demonize each other, we should not assume that we have a monopoly on the truth or on what's right, that we listen to each other and show each other respect, and that we show regard for the most vulnerable in our society.

It's not a particularly political message, but I think it's a good one, at a moment when, in our politics, so often, the only way you get on the news is if you're really rude or you say really obnoxious things about people or you insist that other people's points of views are demonic and evil and leave no room at all for the possibilities of compromise.

I'd like to think that that spirit will continue to permeate Washington for some time to come. And I know that, in his heart, that's who John Boehner was. It was sometimes hard to execute. But he's—as I said, he is a good man and a reasonable man. And he's going to be around for a while, and I hope that we can get some things done before he steps down.

President Xi. Thank you, madam reporter, for your interest in China's economy. China is now committed to improving the marketized renminbi exchange rate formation regime. Since 2005, we adopted the exchange rate reform. By June this year, the renminbi has risen in value by more than 35 percent with the U.S. dollars. Last month—in fact, we are continuing to make reforms to the renminbi exchange rate central parity quotation regime. That increased the intensity for the markets to determine the exchange rate of renminbi.

Due to the influence of factors such as the previous strengthening of the U.S. dollar and the somewhat turbulence on the financial market, the renminbi exchange rate after reform has experienced a certain degree of fluctuation. However, there is no basis for the renminbi to have a devaluation in the long run. At present, the exchange rate between renminbi and U.S. dollars is moving toward stability. Going forward, China will further improve the marketization and formation regime of renminbi exchange rate, maintain the normal fluctuation of the exchange rate, and maintain the basic stability of renminbi at an adaptive and equilibrium level.

At present, China is also under increasing pressure of economic downturn and some fluctuations on the stock market. Challenges and difficulties have obviously increased. But what we are taking is proactive fiscal policy and prudent monetary policy. And we describe them

as measures to stabilize growth, promote reform, restructure the—restructuring, promote people's livelihood, and fend off risks.

By comprehensively taking measures, we managed to maintain a 7 percent of growth rate in the first half of this year. Last year, we achieved a 7.3 percent of growth rate. And compared with the aggregate economic strength, the increase—the absolute increase—of the economy is equivalent to the size of a middle-sized economy.

So, for the first half of this year, our growth order is 7 percent, and for the whole year, I think it should—it's expected at the same level. The Chinese economy maintaining a mid-to-high growth of rate, this is a fundamental that has not changed, because we are equipped with several conditions.

First of all, our people's income are still at a middle-income period. When countries are developing, this is a period where there will be further development. At present, our per capita GDP only stands at seven, eight hundred U.S. dollars, and that is very much behind the United States. There is big room for ascendency and for increase. And we are now doing what we call as the full reforms or the full processes, which is in formatization—a new type of industrialization, urbanization, and the agricultural modernization.

Take the urbanization as an example. Every year, it will increase by 2 percent. Now our urbanization ratio is 53 percent, and it is expected to grow by 2 percent. And that is equivalent to something like 10 million people moving from rural areas to the urban areas. At the same time, we also not—should not let the rural areas be backward. We need to develop the rural areas. Through the Internet Plus and other policies, our industrialization and our urbanization will have a frog-leap development.

Now, the Chinese economy—tuning to a slower growth rate and turning it from a speed-based growth to quality-based growth, and we are moving from an export-driven and investment-driven economy into a economy driven by expanded consumption and domestic demand. We call this is a new normal of the Chinese economy. And I'm confident that going forward, China will surely, for all of us, for everybody, provide a healthy growth that strengthens confidence.

Thank you. And now I would like to remind reporter—[*inaudible*]—from the People's Daily of China to raise questions.

Q. Thank you, President Xi. I have a question—to seek guidance. Now, some people in America believe that China's growth might challenge the U.S. leading position in the world. My question for President Xi is, what is your view on current the United States, and what is China's U.S. policy? Thank you.

President Xi. Thank you. In my view, the U.S. in economic, in military, has remarkable strength. And other countries in the world are also developing. Still, the U.S. has uncompared advantages and strengths.

The cold war has long ended. Today's world has entered into an era of economic globalization where countries are interdependent upon each other. People should move ahead with the times and give up on the old concepts of "you lose, I win" or "zero-sum game" and establish a new concept of peaceful development and willing cooperation. If China develops well, it will benefit the whole world and benefit the United States. If the U.S. develops well, it will also benefit the world and China.

China's policy towards the U.S. is consistent and transparent. As the world's biggest developing country and biggest developed countries and as the world's two biggest economies, our two sides have broad and common interests on world peace and human progress and shoulder important and common responsibilities, although our two sides also have certain differences. But the common interests of the two countries far outweigh those differences.

It is also my sincere hope that the two sides of China and the U.S. will proceed from the fundamental interests of the two peoples and world people, make joint efforts to build a new model of major-country relations between two countries, and realize nonconflict, nonconfrontation, mutual respect, and cooperation.

That should serve as a direction where both sides should strive unswervingly. China is the current international system's builder, contributor,

and developer and participant, and also beneficiary. We are willing to work with all other countries to firmly defend the fruits of victory of the Second World War and the existing international system—U.N.—centered on the U.N. and, at the same time, promote them to developing a more just and equitable direction.

China has raised the One Belt One Road Initiative and proposed to establish the AIIB, et cetera. And all of their aims are to expand mutual and beneficial cooperation with other countries and realize common development. These initiatives are open, transparent, inclusive. They are in—consistent in serving the interests of the U.S. and other countries' interest. And we welcome the U.S. and other parties to actively participate in them.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 12:22 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, President Obama referred to Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama; and Maisy and Finnegan Biden, grandchildren of Vice President Joe Biden. President Xi referred to the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the East Sea (DOC); the Code of Conduct in the East Sea (COC); and the proposed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). President Xi spoke in Chinese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at an Armed Forces Farewell Tribute in Honor of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin E. Dempsey at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Virginia

September 25, 2015

Forty-five years ago, in June of 1970, a telegram arrived in Upstate New York at the home of 18-year-old Marty Dempsey. "Congratulations," it read, "You are appointed to the West Point Class of 1974. . . ." [*Laughter*] Marty was honored. But he had just finished high school, and he wasn't entirely sure he wanted to head off to the Academy. His mother, I'm told, thought different. She urged him to "give it a try for the summer"—which sounds like Beast Barracks meets sleepaway camp. [*Laughter*] Sound advice, with a little Irish charm, runs in the Dempsey family.

Over the decades that followed, he patrolled the Iron Curtain, commanded divisions on desert battlefields, and led America's soldiers. And more than a few times, he burst into song. And over these last 4 years, Marty's wisdom, his vision, and his character have helped lead the greatest fighting force the world has ever known.

Secretary Carter, Deputy Secretary Work, Members of Congress, and the Joint Chiefs, Service Secretaries, men and women of the Defense Department, our Armed Forces, and our military families: It is a deep honor to join you as we pay tribute to a singular leader for our military and our Nation and one of the finest men that I know, General Martin Dempsey.

A little over 4 years ago, I tapped Marty to serve as Chief of Staff of the Army. We let him enjoy it—for 1 day. Then, I asked him to be Chairman. So let me say, Marty, and more importantly, Deanie, this time I promise, no surprises tomorrow. [*Laughter*]

I chose Marty for these leadership roles because of his moral fiber and his deep commitment to American strength and American values. I chose him because of his vision for our military as a more versatile and responsive force. I chose him because he had the steady hand we needed in this moment of transition, as we tackle emerging threats and support so many of our troops as they transition to civilian life. And I've watched Marty manage each of these challenges with integrity and foresight and care. But perhaps most of all, I chose Marty because he's a leader you can trust.

Marty, you've always given it to me straight. I can't tell you how much I have appreciated your candor and your counsel. And I've seen

you build that trust not just with me, but across our military, with our troops and their families, with Congress and our allies abroad, and with the American people.

Today, thanks in no small measure to Marty's leadership, America has reassured allies from Europe to the Asia-Pacific. We ended our combat mission in Afghanistan and brought America's longest war to a responsible end. We've forged new partnerships from South Asia to the Sahel to meet terrorist threats. We've built a coalition that is combatting ISIL in Iraq and Syria. We have bolstered our cyber defenses. We helped halt the spread of Ebola in West Africa.

None of this would have been possible without Marty's guidance and leadership. And what makes it more remarkable is that he's guided our forces through a time of reckless budget cuts. With less than a week before Congress needs to pass a budget to keep the Government open, let me just say, now is not the time for games that lock in sequester. It's not good for our military readiness, it's not good for our troops, it's not good for our families, and it's not good for our country. As Commander in Chief, I believe we should invest in America and in our national security, and not shortchange it.

And yet, even in these tough fiscal times, Marty has made sure we maintain our military superiority. And no one can match our services because no one can match our servicemembers, our sons and daughters who he's cared for like his own. In them, he sees the West Point classmates of his youth. He sees those he commanded. He sees their families, and in them, he sees his own.

There's Deanie, of course, Marty's high school sweetheart, lifelong better half, whose grace and resilience and good cheer embodies the military spouses she fights so fiercely for; Chris, Megan, and Caitlin, who followed in their father's footsteps to wear our Nation's cloth; Marty's mother Sarah, who we thank for making him give the military a try "for the summer." [*Laughter*] And there are his nine grandchildren, who we can be confident will mark this Nation in so many positive ways in the future. On behalf of the American people, I want to thank the entire Dempsey family for their service to our Nation.

Marty will be the first to tell you that he couldn't have done his job without his outstanding Vice Chair. And I, too, have depended on the advice and experience of Admiral Sandy Winnefeld. Thank you, Sandy, for your outstanding service.

In General Joe Dunford and General Paul Selva, two of the most respected officers in our military, we have tested leaders ready to carry on Marty and Sandy's work. I could not be prouder of them and the service they've already rendered this great Nation. And I could not be more confident in the advice and counsel that they'll provide me. Thank you to them. Thank you, Ellyn. Thank you so much for everything that you've done.

Now, we're going to have a lot of work to do long after not just Marty is gone, but I'm gone from the stage. There are always new threats, there are always new challenges in this ever-changing world. We have to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL, the remnants of Al Qaida, terror networks around the world. We have to adapt our defenses for the 21st century. We have to give our troops the support they need to meet their missions. We have to make sure that our forces and our families receive the pay and the benefits and the quality of life that they have earned. That is how we maintain a military that is second to none. And I am confident that we are up to the task.

I'm told that on Marty's desk there's a box. It's a cigar box with 132 cards, each one with the name, picture, and story of every one of the 132 soldiers who gave their lives under his command in Iraq. And on top of the box are three words: "Make It Matter." Make it matter. And every morning, Marty places three of those cards in his pocket so that every moment as Chairman—every meeting, every trip, every decision, every troop review—every moment of every day some of those fallen heroes are with him.

Those cards were with him a few years back when, for the first time as Chairman, Marty spoke to a group of military children who had

lost a parent. And that day, as he walked through the crowd—with some 600 Gold Star kids, young, so full of hope—he began to think about their lives and how each of them would have to make their way without a father or a mother. And Marty had planned to speak, but he couldn't. So he did one of those things that he does best. He began to sing.

And in that moment, the highest ranking military leader in our Nation forged a bond with those children—boys and girls who, at such a tender age, had given up so much—in a way that perhaps nobody else could. And year after year, they've invited him back, because they know Marty Dempsey will always give them everything he has: his voice, but even more, his full heart and soul.

This is the man we honor today. A friend to so many troops and families across our military. A patriot with a profound love for our country and those who sacrifice for it. A trusted leader who in a time of great change "made it matter" all the time.

I am extraordinarily grateful to have had him by my side through the bulk of my Presidency, and I am extraordinarily proud to call him my friend.

Marty, for your lifetime of extraordinary service, you have the deepest thanks of a grateful nation. God bless you, and God bless our men and women in uniform.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:09 p.m. at Summerhall Field. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter; Chris Dempsey, Megan Bailey, and Caitlin Boganski, children of Chairman Dempsey; Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., USMC, Chairman-designate, and Gen. Paul J. Selva, USAF, Vice Chairman–designate, Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Ellyn Dunford, wife of Gen. Dunford. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Joint Statement by President Obama and President Xi Jinping of China on Climate Change

September 25, 2015

In November 2014, President Barack Obama and President Xi Jinping stood together in Beijing to make a historic U.S.-China Joint Announcement on Climate Change, emphasizing their personal commitment to a successful climate agreement in Paris and marking a new era of multilateral climate diplomacy as well as a new pillar in their bilateral relationship. On the occasion of President Xi's State Visit to Washington, D.C., the two Presidents reaffirm their shared conviction that climate change is one of the greatest threats facing humanity and that their two countries have a critical role to play in addressing it. The two Presidents also reaffirm their determination to move ahead decisively to implement domestic climate policies, to strengthen bilateral coordination and cooperation, and to promote sustainable development and the transition to green, low-carbon, and climate-resilient economies.

Vision for the Paris Climate Conference:

- The two Presidents reaffirm the U.S.-China Joint Announcement on Climate Change of November 12, 2014. Recalling the Durban mandate to adopt a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable to all Parties, they strengthen their resolve to work together and with others toward an ambitious, successful Paris outcome that furthers the implementation of the objective of the Convention, mindful of the below 2 degree C global temperature goal.
- They reaffirm their commitment to reach an ambitious agreement in 2015 that reflects the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in light of different national circumstances. They further con-

sider that differentiation should be reflected in relevant elements of the agreement in an appropriate manner.

- Both sides support the inclusion in the Paris outcome of an enhanced transparency system to build mutual trust and confidence and promote effective implementation including through reporting and review of action and support in an appropriate manner. It should provide flexibility to those developing countries that need it in light of their capacities.
- The United States and China welcome the enhanced actions reflected in the intended nationally determined contributions communicated by each other and by other Parties.
- The two sides recognize that Parties' mitigation efforts are crucial steps in a longer-range effort needed to transition to green and low-carbon economies and they should move in the direction of greater ambition over time. Further, the United States and China underscore the importance of formulating and making available mid-century strategies for the transition to low-carbon economies, mindful of the below 2 degree C global temperature goal. Both sides also emphasize the need for global low-carbon transformation during the course of this century.
- Both sides stress the importance of adaptation. The Paris agreement should accord greater prominence and visibility to adaptation, including by recognizing that it is a key component of the long-term global response to climate change, in terms of both preparing for the unavoidable impacts of climate change and enhancing resilience. The agreement should encourage Parties to work at both the national and international levels to build resilience and reduce vulnerability. It should provide for regular, high-level focus on adaptation.
- The two sides reaffirm that, in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation, developed countries committed to a goal of mobilizing jointly USD 100 billion a year by 2020 to address the needs of developing countries and that this funding would come from a wide variety of sources, public and private, bilateral and multilateral, including alternative sources of finance. They underscore the importance of continued, robust financial support beyond 2020 to help developing countries build low-carbon and climate-resilient societies. They urge continued support by developed countries to developing countries and encourage such support by other countries willing to do so.
- The two sides also recognize the crucial role of major technological advancement in the transition to green and low-carbon, climate-resilient and sustainable development and affirm the importance of significant increases in basic research and development in the coming years both within their own economies and globally.

Advancing Domestic Climate Action:

- The United States and China are committed to achieving their respective post-2020 actions as announced in last November's Joint Announcement. Since that time, both countries have taken key steps toward implementation and are committing to continue intensifying efforts, which will substantially promote global investment in low-carbon technologies and solutions.
- Since last November's Joint Announcement, the United States has taken major steps to reduce its emissions, and it is announcing important additional implementation plans today. In August 2015, the United States finalized the Clean Power Plan, which will reduce CO_2 emissions from the power sector to 32% below 2005 levels by 2030. In 2016, the United States will finalize a federal plan

to implement carbon emission standards for power plants in states that do not choose to design their own implementation plans under the Clean Power Plan. The United States commits to finalize its next-stage, world-class fuel efficiency standards for heavy-duty vehicles in 2016 and implement them in 2019. In August 2015, the United States proposed separate standards for methane emissions from landfills and the oil and gas sector, and commits to finalize both standards in 2016. In July 2015, the United States finalized significant new measures to reduce use and emissions of HFCs through the Significant New Alternatives Policy (SNAP) program, and commits today to continue to pursue new actions in 2016 to reduce HFC use and emissions. Finally, in the buildings sector, the United States commits to finalize over 20 efficiency standards for appliances and equipment by the end of 2016.

- China is making great efforts to advance ecological civilization and promote green, low-carbon, climate resilient and sustainable development through accelerating institutional innovation and enhancing policies and actions. China will lower carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP by 60% to 65% from the 2005 level by 2030 and increase the forest stock volume by around 4.5 billion cubic meters on the 2005 level by 2030. China will promote green power dispatch, giving priority, in distribution and dispatching, to renewable power generation and fossil fuel power generation of higher efficiency and lower emission levels. China also plans to start in 2017 its national emission trading system, covering key industry sectors such as iron and steel, power generation, chemicals, building materials, paper-making, and nonferrous metals. China commits to promote low-carbon buildings and transportation, with the share of green buildings reaching 50% in newly built buildings in cities and towns by 2020 and the share of public transport in motorized travel reaching 30% in big- and medium-sized cities by 2020. It will finalize next-stage fuel efficiency standards for heavy-duty vehicles in 2016 and implement them in 2019. Actions on HFCs continue to be supported and accelerated, including effectively controlling HFC–23 emissions by 2020.

Enhancing Bilateral and Multilateral Climate Cooperation:

- Building on the robust bilateral cooperation initiatives that support the achievement of ambitious domestic actions, the two sides commit to further deepen and enhance these efforts through the U.S.-China Climate Change Working Group (CCWG), the premier mechanism for facilitating constructive U.S.-China dialogue and cooperation on climate change. The two sides have made concrete progress in each of the initiatives, including heavy-duty and other vehicles, smart grids, carbon capture, utilization, and storage (CCUS), energy efficiency in buildings and industry, collecting and managing greenhouse gas emissions data, climate change and forests, industrial boilers efficiency and fuel switching, and climate-smart/low-carbon cities, and will continue to work together on green ports and vessels and zero emission vehicles, as well as the enhanced policy dialogue and cooperation on HFCs. Furthermore, a new Domestic Policy Dialogue was established this year to share information on respective domestic actions. The two sides will continue to devote significant effort and resources to the existing initiatives. On the CCUS project agreed to in the 2014 Joint Announcement, the two countries have identified the project site in Yan'an-Yulin, Shan'xi Province, China, operated by Shan'xi Yanchang Petroleum. The two sides will continue to collaborate to demonstrate the utilization of CO_2 for enhanced water recovery.

- The United States and China recognize and appreciate the critical role of cities, states and provinces in addressing climate change, supporting the implementation of national actions and accelerating the long-term transition to a low carbon and livable society. The Presidents welcome the outcome of the First Session of the U.S.-China Climate-Smart/Low-Carbon Cities Summit, held in Los Angeles on September 15–16, 2015, and look forward to a successful Second Session to be held in Beijing in 2016. The Presidents support the U.S.-China Climate Leaders Declaration, signed by 24 provinces, states, cities, and counties of the United States and China, as well as the climate actions listed in the Declaration, including an initiative by provinces and cities in China for peaking pioneers and the medium and long-term greenhouse gas reduction targets of states, counties and cities in the United States. The United States and China also emphasize that businesses can play an important role in promoting low-carbon development, and will make continued efforts to encourage and incentivize actions by businesses.
- The United States and China recognize the importance of mobilizing climate finance to support low-carbon, climate-resilient development in developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, small island developing states, and African countries. In this connection, the United States reaffirms its $3 billion pledge to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and China announces that it will make available ¥20 billion for setting up the China South-South Climate Cooperation Fund to support other developing countries to combat climate change, including to enhance their capacity to access GCF funds. Going forward and through these steps and other actions, the two sides are determined to work constructively and cooperatively together and along with all Parties to the UNFCCC to support developing countries to transition to green and low-carbon development and build climate resilience.
- The United States and China consider that their bilateral investments in other countries should support low-carbon technologies and climate resilience and commit to discussing the role of public finance in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Both countries are to use public resources to finance and encourage the transition toward low-carbon technologies as a priority. As part of an ongoing and serious commitment to strengthen low-carbon policies and regulations, the United States has ended public financing for new conventional coal-fired power plants except in the poorest countries. China will strengthen green and low-carbon policies and regulations with a view to strictly controlling public investment flowing into projects with high pollution and carbon emissions both domestically and internationally.
- The United States and China will strengthen their dialogue and cooperation to advance climate change related issues in relevant fora complementary to the UNFCCC, such as the G–20, Montreal Protocol, International Civil Aviation Organization, International Maritime Organization, World Trade Organization and Clean Energy Ministerial.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks at a State Dinner Honoring President Xi Jinping of China
September 25, 2015

President Obama. Well, good evening, everyone. On behalf of Michelle and myself, welcome to the White House. President Xi, Madame Peng, members of the Chinese delegation: Once again, I want to welcome you as we honor the ties between our nations and our peoples.

In our visits to China, Michelle and I have experienced the traditions, the culture, the cuisine of a civilization that spans thousands of years. And I understand that in China there's a saying, "Food is heaven." [*Laughter*] I dare not stand in the way of the divine, so I will be brief. [*Laughter*]

Today President Xi and I agreed to expand our cooperation between our two nations. I know that some—in both countries and around the world—question whether we can sustain the cooperation that we need and the world needs. I think we can draw encouragement from the ties that have long connected our peoples.

I think of the American airmen during the Second World War who went down over China. Chinese villagers sheltered them, fed them, clothed them, and treated their wounds. And decades later, one Chinese man said of the American he saved: "He is like the thumb on the hand . . . and I am like the finger. . . . We are brothers together."

I think of the ties that are forged every single day and that we've worked to expand in our work today: American tourists in China visiting the Forbidden City and the Great Wall, Chinese tourists visiting our Statue of Liberty and Independence Hall, our students who cross the Pacific to learn from each other, our scientists who discover new treatments together, our health workers who fought Ebola together.

There will be times where there are differences between our two countries. That's inevitable. There will be times where our interests entirely overlap. But what I think will be sustaining is the friendship between our peoples, the foundation of the ties between our nations. And just as you say in China that a "sea accepts a hundred rivers," our countries together are stronger as—when we accept the diversity and the views and contributions and uphold the rights of all of our peoples.

And so I propose a toast: To the people of China and the people of the United States, may they work together, like fingers on the same hand, in friendship and in peace. *Ganbei!*

[*At this point, President Obama offered a toast.*]

President Xi. Mr. President and Mrs. Obama, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends: Good evening. It gives me great pleasure to attend this grand dinner. On behalf of the Chinese delegation and in the name of my wife and myself, I wish to extend heartfelt thanks to you, Mr. President, and to Mrs. Obama.

I also extend my cordial greetings to all the friends present and, through you, to all those across American society who take a strong interest in China-U.S. relationship and support its growth.

My state visit to the United States is an unforgettable journey. From the West Coast to the East Coast, what strikes me most is that the American people have a lot of good will toward the Chinese people. And they hope much more can be accomplished through enhanced China-U.S. cooperation. I want to assure you that such good will is fully reciprocated by the Chinese people.

Since yesterday evening, I have had three meetings with President Obama. We had candid and in-depth exchange of views on China-U.S. relations and the major issues that are vital to world peace and development. And we reached broad and important agreement. Our discussion has yielded many positive outcomes.

Thirty-six years ago, during his visit to the United States, Mr. Deng Xiaoping predicted that China-U.S. relations would make major progress under new, historical conditions. Bracing against wind and rain, our relations have forged ahead and have made extraordinary achievements in the past 30 years and

more. I am convinced that the future of U.S.-China relations will be even more bright.

This morning my wife and Mrs. Obama visited the panda house at the National Zoo. [*Laughter*] She later told me that she was deeply touched by the American kids' love of panda and their curiosity about and a fondness for China, the home of panda. My wife said at the event, the seeds of China-U.S. friendship have already taken root in the hearts of the kids. I cannot agree more with her.

Mr. President and Mrs. Obama, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, as an ancient Chinese saying goes: "Only those who take actions can achieve their goal. Only those who stride forward can reach their destination." President Abraham Lincoln once said, "The best way to predict the future is to create it." Let us continue to respect and learn from each other, turn our blueprint into reality, and write in a creative way a new, historic chapter in China-U.S. relations.

In closing, let me propose a toast: To the friendship between Chinese and American peoples, to the prosperity of China and the United States and the happiness of our two peoples, and to the health of President and Mrs. Obama and all the friends present. Cheers!

[*President Xi offered a toast.*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:19 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Peng Liyuan, wife of President Xi. President Xi spoke in Chinese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

The President's Weekly Address
September 26, 2015

Hi, everybody. Today, September 26, is National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day. It's a day where you can safely, conveniently, and responsibly dispose of expired and unwanted prescription drugs at collection sites in your community.

Here's why this matters. More Americans now die every year from drug overdoses than they do in car crashes. And most of those deaths aren't due to drugs like cocaine or heroin, but rather prescription drugs. In 2013 alone, overdoses from prescription pain medications killed more than 16,000 Americans. And most young people who begin misusing prescription drugs don't buy them in some dark alley; they get them from the medicine cabinet.

If that's not a good enough reason to participate in National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day, here's another. Many prescription pain medications belong to the same class of drugs as heroin. In fact, four in five heroin users started out by misusing prescription drugs. And over the course of just 1 year, between 2013 and 2014, we saw a 33-percent increase in the number of heroin users.

All of this takes a terrible toll on too many families, in too many communities, all across the country, big and small, urban and rural. It strains law enforcement and treatment programs. It costs all of us in so many different ways.

That's why, 4 years ago, my administration unveiled a Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Plan. We've been partnering with communities to combat overdoses, and we're seeing some promising results. That's why the budget I put forward this year would build on those efforts. It would make critical investments in things like drug monitoring programs, equipping more first responders to save more lives, and expanding medication-assisted treatment programs, including in our prisons.

In fact, getting smarter about how we address substance use disorders is a vital part of reforming our criminal justice system. Rather than keep spending billions of taxpayer dollars on needlessly long prison sentences for nonviolent drug offenders, we could save money and get better outcomes by getting treatment to those who need it. And we could use some of the savings to make sure the brave men and

women of law enforcement have the resources they need to go after drug kingpins and violent gangs, disrupt the flow of drugs into our country, and address the real threats to our communities.

With no other disease do we expect people to wait until they're a danger to themselves or others to self-diagnose and seek treatment. So we should approach abuse as an opportunity to intervene, not incarcerate. And we all have a role to play here. Parents, we have to understand how important it is to talk to our kids and to safely store medications in the house. The medical community has to be engaged too, because better prescribing practices will make a difference.

And as a country, we have to keep working to reduce drug use through evidence-based treatment, prevention, and recovery. Because research shows it works. Courageous Americans show it works also, every single day. That's why the man I named to head the Office of National Drug Control Policy—Michael Botticelli—is a man in long-term recovery himself. He talks about it openly and honestly, precisely to strike down the shame and stigma that too often keep people from seeking care before it's too late.

This is something I'll be talking about more in the weeks to come in communities across the country. Because it's a challenge we can solve if we work together.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2:05 p.m. on September 24 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on September 26. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 25, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on September 26.

Remarks at the Closing Session of the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in New York City
September 27, 2015

Good afternoon. Mr. Secretary-General, fellow delegates, ladies and gentlemen: It is a great honor to be here to address the topic of sustainable development.

In many of our nations, especially developed countries, there is among our general population a genuine compassion towards those in need. There is a recognition of the grinding poverty that so many experience every day around the world. And yet sometimes, it's said that our efforts to combat poverty and disease do not and cannot work, that there are some places beyond hope, that certain people and regions are condemned to an endless cycle of suffering. Here today we put those myths to rest. Today we set aside the skepticism, and we lift up the hope that is available to us through collective action.

Because the world came together in an unprecedented effort, the global hunger rate has already been slashed. Tens of millions of more boys and girls are today in school. Prevention and treatment of measles and malaria and tuberculosis have saved nearly 60 million lives. HIV/AIDS infections and deaths have plummeted. And more than 1 billion people have lifted themselves up from extreme poverty—1 billion.

The entire world can take enormous pride in these historic achievements. And so let the skeptics and cynics know: development works. Investing in public health works. We can break the cycle of poverty. People and nations can rise into prosperity. Despite the cruelties of our world and the ravages of disease, millions of lives can be saved if we are focused and if we work together. Cynicism is our enemy. A belief, a capacity in the dignity of every individual, and a recognition that we, each of us, can play a small part to play in lifting up people all around the world—that is the message that we are sending here today. And because of the work of so many who are assembled here today, we can point to past success. And yet we

are also here today because we understand that our work is nowhere near done. We can take pride in what we've accomplished, but we cannot be complacent.

When 11 boys and girls die every single minute from preventable causes, we know we have more work to do. When hundreds of women die every single day just from having a baby, we know we have more work to do. When tens of millions of children are still not in school, when hundreds of millions of people have no clean water, no toilets, we have so much more to do.

Right now some 800 million men, women and children are scraping by on less than $1.25 a day. Imagine that. Gripped by the ache of an empty stomach. Billions of our fellow human beings are at risk of dying from diseases that we know how to prevent. Many children are just one mosquito bite away from death. And that is a moral outrage. It is a profound injustice. It is literally a matter of life and death, and now the world must act. We cannot leave people behind.

And so today we commit ourselves to new sustainable development goals, including our goal of ending extreme poverty in our world. We do so understanding how difficult the task may be. We suffer no illusions of the challenges ahead. But we understand this is something that we must commit ourselves to. Because in doing so, we recognize that our most basic bond—our common humanity—compels us to act. An impoverished child in a distant slum or a neighborhood not that far from here is just as equal, just as worthy, as any of our children, as any of us, as any head of government or leader in this great hall.

We reaffirm that supporting development is not charity, but is instead one of the smartest investments we can make in our own future. After all, it is a lack of development—when people have no education and no jobs and no hope, a feeling that their basic human dignity is being violated—that helps fuel so much of the tensions and conflict and instability in our world.

And I profoundly believe that many of the conflicts, the refugee crises, the military interventions over the years might have been avoided if nations had truly invested in the lives of their people and if the wealthiest nations on Earth were better partners in working with those that are trying to lift themselves up. As one of the founders of the United Nations, Ralph Bunche once said, "Peace is no mere matter of men fighting or not fighting. Peace, to have meaning . . . must be translated into bread or rice, shelter, health, and education."

I'm here to say that in this work, the United States will continue to be your partner. Five years ago, I pledged here that America would remain the global leader in development, and the United States Government, in fact, remains the single largest donor of development assistance, including in global health. In times of crisis—from Ebola to Syria—we are the largest provider of humanitarian aid. In times of disaster and crisis, the world can count on the friendship and generosity of the American people.

The question before us, though, as an international community, is how do we meet these new goals that we've set today? How can we do our work better? How can we stretch our resources and our funding more effectively? How can donor countries be smarter? And how can recipient countries do more with what they receive? We have to learn from the past to see where we succeeded so that we can duplicate that success and to understand where we've fallen short and correct those shortcomings.

And we start by understanding that this next chapter of development cannot fall victim to the old divides between developed nations and developing ones. Poverty, growing inequality, exists in all of our nations, and all of our nations have work to do. And that includes here in the United States.

That's why, after a terrible recession, my administration has worked to keep millions of families from falling into poverty. That's why we've brought quality, affordable health care to more than 17 million Americans. Here in this country, the wealthiest nation on Earth, we're still working every day to perfect our Union and to be more equal and more just and to

treat the most vulnerable members of our society with value and concern.

And that's why today I am committing the United States to achieving the sustainable development goals. And as long as I am President, and well after I'm done being President, I will keep fighting for the education and housing and health care and jobs that reduce inequality and create opportunity here in the United States and around the world. Because this is not just the job of politicians, this is work for all of us.

Now, this next chapter of development cannot just be about what governments spend, it has to harness the unprecedented resources of our interconnected world. In just a few short years—in the areas of health and food security and energy—my administration has committed and helped mobilize more than a hundred billion dollars to promote development and save lives. More than $100 billion. And guided by the new consensus we reached in Addis, I'm calling on others to join us. More governments, more institutions, more businesses, more philanthropies, more NGOs, more faith communities, more citizens—we all need to step up with the will and the resources and the coordination to achieve our goals. This must be the work of the world.

At the same time, this next chapter of development must focus not simply on the dollars we spend, but on the results that we achieve. And this demands new technologies and approaches, accountability, data, behavioral science—understanding that there are—there's lessons that we have learned, best practices on how people actually live so that we can dramatically improve outcomes. It means breaking cycles of dependence by helping people become more self-sufficient, not just giving people fish, but teaching them how to fish. That's the purpose of development.

Rather than just sending food during famine—although we have to do that to avert starvation—we also have to bring new techniques and new seeds and new technologies to more farmers so they can boost their yields and increase their incomes, feed more people and lift countless millions out of poverty. Rather than just respond to outbreaks like Ebola—although we have to do that, and we have—let's also strengthen public health systems and advance global health security to prevent epidemics in the first place.

As more countries take ownership of their HIV/AIDS programs, the United States is setting two new bold goals. Over the next 2 years, we'll increase the number of people that our funding reaches—so that nearly 13 million people with HIV/AIDS get lifesaving treatment—and we'll invest $300 million to help achieve a 40-percent reduction in new HIV infections among young women and girls in the hardest hit areas of sub-Saharan Africa. And I believe we can do that—the first AIDS-free generation.

This next chapter of development must also unleash economic growth, not just for a few at the top, but inclusive, sustainable growth that lifts up the fortunes of the many. We know the ingredients for creating jobs and opportunity; they are not a secret. So let's embrace reforms that attract trade and investment to areas that are in need of investment and in need of trade. Let's trade and build more together, make it easier for developing countries to sell more of their goods around the world. And let's invest in our greatest resource—our people—their education, their skills. Let's invest in innovative entrepreneurs, the striving young people who embrace new technology and are starting businesses and can ignite new industries that change the world. I have met young people in—on every continent, and they can lead the way if we give them the tools they need.

Now, our new development goals are ambitious. But thanks to the good work of many of you, they are achievable if we work together, if we meet our responsibilities to each other. I believe that. The progress of recent years gives us hope. We know what works, and we know how to do this. But perhaps because this is now my seventh year of addressing the General Assembly, I tend to be more blunt. [*Laughter*] Along with the gray hair, I'm becoming more likely to speak my mind. [*Laughter*] So indulge me when I say that we will never achieve our goals if we do not squarely confront several in-

sidious threats to the dignity and well-being of people around the world. No matter how much hard work is done by development agencies, no matter how large the donations and commitments that are made by donor countries, if we don't take care of some other elements of development, we will not meet our—the goals that we've set.

Number one, development is threatened by bad governance. Today we affirm what we know to be true from decades of experience—development and economic growth that is truly sustainable and inclusive depends on governments and institutions that care about their people, that are accountable, that respect human rights and deliver justice for everybody and not just some.

So, in the face of corruption that siphons billions away from schools and hospitals and infrastructure into foreign bank accounts, governments have to embrace transparency and open government and rule of law. And combating illicit finance must be a global effort because it is part of our development effort. And citizens and civil society groups must be free to organize and speak their mind and work for progress, because that's how countries develop; that's how countries succeed.

Development is also threatened by inequality. And this is a political debate that we have in this country, so I just want to be clear: This is not something from which the United States is immune to. Every country has to grapple with this issue. The wealthiest and most powerful in our societies oftentimes like to keep things as they are, and they often have disproportionate political influence. When poor children are more likely to get sick and die than children in wealthier neighborhoods just across town; when rural families are more likely to go without clean water; when ethnic and religious minorities or people with disabilities or people of different sexual orientations are discriminated against or can't access education and opportunity—that holds all of us back. And so, in all of our countries, we have to invest in the interventions that allow us to reach more people, because no one should be left behind just because of where they live or what they look like.

Development is threatened by old attitudes, especially those that deny rights and opportunity to women. In too many places, girls are less likely to be in school than boys. Globally, women are less likely to have a job than men and are more likely to live in poverty. And I've said this before, and I will keep repeating it: One of the best indicators of whether a country will succeed is how it treats its women. When women have an education, when women have a job, their children are more likely to get an education, their families are healthier and more prosperous. Their communities and countries do better as well. So every nation—all of our nations—must invest in the education and health and skills of our women and girls.

And I have to say I do not have patience for the excuse of, well, we have our own ways of doing things. I understand—we understand that there is a long tradition in every society of discriminating against women. [*Laughter*] But that's not an excuse for taking a new path in order to make sure that everyone in a society has opportunity.

Development is threatened if we do not recognize the incredible dynamism and opportunity of today's Africa. Hundreds of millions of Africans still struggle in the face of grinding poverty and deadly diseases, daily assaults on their lives and dignity. But I visited Africa recently, and what I saw gave me hope and I know should give you hope, because that continent has made impressive gains in health and education. It is one of the fastest growing regions of the world, with a rising middle class.

And during my travels, Africans—especially young Africans—tell me they don't just want aid, they want trade. They want businesses. They want investment. So I call on the world to join us as we mobilize billions of dollars in new trade and investment and development in Africa, and that includes Power Africa, our initiative to bring electricity and greater opportunity to more than 60 million African homes and businesses. If we get Africa fulfilling its full potential, that will help the entire global economy. Everyone here will be helped. It's not a zero-sum game. We are invested in their success.

Development is threatened by war. This should be a simple proposition, but it bears repeating. It is no coincidence that half of the people living in extreme poverty around the world live in places afflicted by chronic violence and conflict. Today, some 60 million men, women, and children have been forced from their homes, many by conflicts in the Middle East and in Africa. Now, these are humanitarian crises and refugees that we cannot ignore, and we have to deliver the urgent aid that is needed right now. And those countries that can must do more to accommodate refugees, recognizing that those children are just like ours. But our efforts must be matched by the hard work of diplomacy and reconciliation to end conflicts that so often tear societies apart.

And as I said earlier, war and conflict is more likely to arise where we have bad governance and we have high inequality and we have discrimination against minority groups and ethnic groups and we have low educational levels. So these things are all related.

And finally, development is threatened by climate change. And I want to thank the Secretary-General for the extraordinary leadership and work that he's done on this issue.

All of our countries will be affected by a changing climate. But the world's poorest people will bear the heaviest burden, from rising seas and more intense droughts, shortages of water and food. We will be seeing climate change refugees. As His Holiness Pope Francis has rightly implored the world, this is a moral calling.

In just 2 months, the world has an opportunity to unite around a strong global agreement. I saw President Hollande walk in a few moments ago; we are going to be converging in Paris. With his leadership, and the leadership of every world leader, we need to establish the tools and financing to help developing nations embrace clean energy, adapt to climate change, and ensure that there's not a false choice between economic development and the best practices that can save our planet. We can do the same at the same time. And the communities and lives of billions of people depend on the work that we do.

Future generations of young people watching today and tomorrow will judge us by the choices we make in the months and years ahead. And one of those young people is Eva Tolage. Now, Eva lives in a village in Tanzania. She's 15 years old, and she wrote me a letter. Some of you know I get 10 letters a day, mostly from inside the United States, but sometimes international letters. I get 40,000 a day, but I read 10. [*Laughter*]

And so Eva told me about her parents, farmers who struggle to provide for their seven children. And this young 15-year-old girl—a girl the age of my daughters—she dreams of going to college, but with little food to eat, she explained how it's hard for her sometimes to concentrate in school. She explained that her house doesn't have electricity, so it's hard for her to study at night.

It's not because her parents don't love her and don't have ambitions for her. Her father works incredibly hard in the fields to pay for her education. But they just need a little help. "I won't let him down," Eva said. "I'll do whatever it takes," she said in her letter. And then, knowing that we would be gathered at this summit to help lift up families like hers, she asked me a question that could be asked of all of our nations: "What will you commit to doing . . . ?" What will you do?

And there are billions of boys and girls just like Eva. They're just like our children. They have as much talent and as much hope for the future. And they're willing to work hard, and their parents love them just as much as we love ours. And just by the accident of birth, it's so much more difficult for them to achieve their dreams as it is for our children. But in the eyes of God, they are the same children. They're just as important.

And for Eva and all those just trying to survive another day in conditions that many of us can barely imagine, it can sometimes seem as if the world is blind to their struggles and their dreams. And so today I say to Eva and hundreds of millions—billions—like her: We see you. We hear you. I've read your letter. And

we commit ourselves—as nations, as one world—to the urgent work that must be done: to standing with families like Eva's as they work and strive for a better life; to ending the injustice of extreme poverty; to upholding the inherent dignity of every human being, whatever it takes. We cannot let them down. And with your help, we won't.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:04 p.m. in the General Assembly Hall at United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations.

Remarks at the Democratic National Committee LGBT Gala in New York City
September 27, 2015

Hello, New York! Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Democrats! Thank you, New York! Thank you. Everybody, sit down. Obergefell. Just to be clear. It is good to be in New York. Although, I do apologize. This week is rough for you guys. [*Laughter*] I mean, traffic is bad enough during UNGA, but you add the Pope to it—[*laughter*]—and that's serious traffic.

Give it up for Betty Who! And give it up for Jim for not just the terrific introduction, but Jim represents all the trailblazers and pioneers and activists whose courage and persistence have made America a better place. Please give him a big round of applause. We're very proud of him.

We've got some outstanding Members of Congress and elected officials who are here tonight, including the chair of the DNC, Debbie Wasserman Schultz. It is Debbie's birthday today. You threw her quite a party. We've also got DNC treasurer, Andy Tobias. Senator Tammy Baldwin. New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman is here. Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey is here. And of course, all of you are here.

Seven years ago we came together not just to elect a President, but to reaffirm our faith in that most American of ideals: the notion that people, no matter where they come from, what they look like, what their last name is, or who they love can change this country. And from the beginning, that faith was tested, by a great recession, by political obstruction, by established barriers and everyday indignities, all of which reminded us that our march toward equality was unfinished.

And time after time, the cynics told us that we were foolish to keep believing, that we were naive to hope, that change was too messy or not possible at all. And if you admit it, there were some in this room here who were skeptical that everything that needed to happen would happen. The cynics were wrong. Tonight we live in an America where "don't ask, don't tell" is something that "don't exist."

We live in an America where all of us—LGBT or not—are protected by a hate crimes law that bears Matthew Shepard's name. We live in an America where a growing share of older generations recognize that love is love and younger generations don't even know what all the fuss was about. And tonight, thanks to the unbending sense of justice passed down through generations of citizens who never gave up hope that we could bring this country closer to our founding ideals—that all of us are created equal—we now live in America where our marriages are equal as well.

It's getting better for all of us. Our businesses have created 13 million new jobs in the past 5½ years. In 2012, the Republican nominee for this office promised to get the unemployment rate down to 6 percent by the end of next year. [*Laughter*] We moved that up a little bit and got it down to 5 percent right now. We were told that Obamacare would kill jobs, explode the deficits, destroy freedom. Today, we've seen 66 consecutive months of private sector job growth, a streak that just happened to begin the month I signed Obamacare into law. Meanwhile, we've cut our deficit by two-thirds, and over 17 million Americans have health insurance because of Obamacare. And along

with the 17 million who've got health insurance through Obamacare, there are tens of millions more—all of you if you've got health insurance—who now know that in this country, you can't be discriminated against just because you get sick. Those days are in the past.

Reading scores are up. College attendance is up. High school graduations are up. We've doubled the production of clean energy. We are making incredible progress when it comes to climate change. On every metric, by every standard, we've made progress.

Now, you would not know this—[*laughter*]—if you were listening to the busload of Republicans fighting each other for this job. [*Laughter*] It somehow doesn't come up in debate. [*Laughter*] In their world, everything was terrific back in 2008—[*laughter*]—when we were in the midst of a spiral into the worst financial crisis and economic crisis since the Great Depression, when unemployment and uninsured rates were rising and when our economy was shedding jobs each month, and we were mired in two wars, hopelessly addicted to foreign oil, and bin Laden was still at large. Those were the golden years, apparently. [*Laughter*] And then, I came in and messed it all up.

I have to say, I don't pay attention to much of this stuff. [*Laughter*] But you got to give these folks credit for chutzpah. [*Laughter*] I mean, they maintain a straight face when they're saying this. And then, in interviews, the reporters are, like, just kind of letting them talk as if what they were saying was true. [*Laughter*]

And so, since everything was doing so well back in 2007, 2008, now if we can just repeal Obamacare and gut Wall Street reform and shut down our Government over women's access to health care and deny that the planet is getting warmer, they've got a plan to get us back on track. [*Laughter*]

Now, the good news is, they probably won't use marriage equality as a wedge issue like they did in 2004 because the country has come too far. In fact, America has left the leaders of the Republican Party behind. One of their leading candidates argued that going to prison turns you gay. [*Laughter*] Well, you think I'm—I shouldn't go into this? [*Laughter*] No, I mean, I'm just stating the facts. Another candidate boasts that he introduced an amendment to end nationwide marriage equality, which isn't even an accomplishment at all. [*Laughter*] A third says Americans should just disobey the Supreme Court's ruling entirely. I'm sure he loves the Constitution, except for Article III. [*Laughter*] And maybe the Equal Protection Amendment. And 14th Amendment, generally. [*Laughter*]

Now, look, for some Americans, there's no doubt that this change has been a whirlwind. And we believe that these changes have been for the better. But we have to recognize—and in fact, I know the people in this room do because they felt it in their own family sometimes or in the workplace—that with change, with any progress, comes some unease. And as Americans, I think we have to acknowledge that. I think that it's important for us to recognize that there are still parts of the country that are getting there, but it's going to take some time.

We affirm that we cherish our religious freedom and are profoundly respectful of religious traditions. But we also have to say clearly that our religious freedom doesn't grant us the freedom to deny our fellow Americans their constitutional rights. And that even as we are respectful and accommodating genuine concerns and interests of religious institutions, we need to reject politicians who are supporting new forms of discrimination as a way to scare up votes. That's not how we move America forward.

So, to secure the gains this country has made requires continued vigilance, not complacency. This country has come too far, and people of good will in both political parties are too plentiful to turn back now. We've made sure that Federal contractors can't fire a worker just for being gay. We should make sure that no American lives in fear of being fired just because of who they love. We've come a long way in changing hearts and minds so that trans men and women can be who they are, not just on magazine covers, but in workplaces and schools and communities. And to build on that

progress, we should support efforts to ban so-called conversion therapy for minors.

So we've got to keep striving every day to treat each other the way I believe God sees us, as equal in His eyes. Harvey Milk once said, "If a gay person makes it, the doors are open to everyone." But to those of us who've made it through those doors, we've got a unique obligation to reach back and make sure other people can make it through those doors too. We have a responsibility to stand up to bigotry, not just against us, but against anybody, anywhere. We have a responsibility to stand up for freedom, not just our own freedom, but for everybody's freedom. We speak up to condemn hatred against anybody—gay or straight, Black or White, Christian, Muslim, Jew, nonbeliever, immigrant—because we remember what silence felt like when hatred was directed at us, and we've got to be champions on behalf of justice for everybody, not just our own.

That's what makes us human. And that's America at its best: our ability to connect, our ability to see ourselves in somebody else. To be an ally to the marginalized, to the dispossessed, to the discriminated against. To recognize our joy and our struggles and our fears and our hope and our love in somebody else.

Maybe it's the trans activist demanding dignity. Maybe it's the immigrant hoping to contribute, or the middle class kid struggling to pay for college. Maybe it's the woman denied equal pay, the African American denied the right to vote, the worker denied a living wage. Their stories may not be ours, but surely we can see our stories in theirs. We can make their fight our own.

And in the end, that's what makes me proudest to be a Democrat. I think we're right on most policy issues. I think that we have the better argument in economics and foreign affairs. But at the core of this party today as it's currently constituted—and we have to remind ourselves that it hasn't always been that way. There have been times where the Democratic Party stood in the way of progress. And there have been times where Republicans, like Abraham Lincoln and Everett Dirksen, stood on the right side of change.

Right now what makes me proudest about being a Democrat is, is that at our core, we really do believe in everybody having a shot. At our core, we really do believe that that's not just a theoretical assertion, but it's an obligation. It compels us. It's part of one American family: to fight on behalf of those who haven't had the same kind of chances that we do; to make sure that everybody has dignity and respect and that every kid out there is able to live out their dreams.

We mean it when we say that all are created equal. And we understand that that has to be operative in our own individual lives, but we also have to express it through the common enterprise called government. We mean it when we say that in this country, of all countries, everyone deserves an equal shot.

And so, Democrats, over the next 14 months, we have to work even harder than we did when I was first on the ballot. We're going to have to work harder to protect the gains that we've made. We're going to have to work harder to widen the circle of opportunity for all who strive for it. It will not be easy. There's always a contest in this country since its founding between hope and fear. What makes America special is, is that though sometimes we zig and zag, eventually, hope wins out. But it only wins out because folks like you put your shoulder behind the wheel and push it in that direction.

That was true in the past. That will be true in the future. I look forward to working with you to make sure it happens in this election cycle.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:57 p.m. at Gotham Hall. In his remarks, he referred to James Obergefell, plaintiff in the U.S. Supreme Court case *Obergefell* v. *Hodges*, which ruled in favor of marriage equality for same-sex couples; musician Betty Who; 2012 Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney; and 2016 Republican Presidential candidates Benjamin S. Carson, Sr., Sen. R. Edward "Ted" Cruz, and former Gov. Michael D. Huckabee of Arkansas.

Statement on the 20th Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women

September 27, 2015

I am proud to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women. Today we recommit ourselves to the basic principle affirmed there, namely that "[w]omen's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace."

The United States understands that women's rights are human rights and that empowered women and educated girls are critical to achieving lasting peace, security, and prosperity. Over the last 20 years, we have made tremendous strides toward gender equality:

- We have worked with Congress to reauthorize the groundbreaking Violence Against Women Act, enacting new protections and strengthening existing protections, including for LGBT individuals and Native American survivors of domestic violence.
- Through the Affordable Care Act, we have dramatically increased access to quality, affordable health care for women and girls across the United States and put an end to women being charged more for health care than men.
- With our National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security and by chairing the Equal Futures Partnership, we are encouraging and supporting women's economic and political empowerment both at home and abroad.
- Within the United States, we are taking steps to support working families, encourage women and girls to pursue careers in the STEM fields, and provide additional opportunities for women entrepreneurs.

But we know that much work remains. Women and girls continue to face violence and discrimination at home, at work, in school, and in their communities. Women continue to be paid less than men for equal work. In too many places around the world, girls do not have the same educational opportunities as boys. Too often, women's contributions are undervalued, underutilized, and suppressed. And in too many places—from China to Egypt, from Russia to Venezuela—women have been swept up in repressive crackdowns on civil society and deprived of their universal rights and fundamental freedoms.

That's why my administration continues to work to advance the empowerment and education of women and girls here and abroad. It's why we are dedicating additional resources to address violence against women and girls. It's why we are investing in job training and apprenticeships to help women earn better-paying jobs. It is why we launched "Let Girls Learn," to address the challenges adolescent girls around the world face in enrolling, completing and succeeding in school. And it is why my administration's "Stand With Civil Society" initiative is supporting the right of women and all people around the world to work peacefully for the betterment of their societies without fear that their rights and freedoms will be unjustly abridged.

Today we renew our resolve to work tirelessly toward a world where every woman and girl can enjoy the rights and freedoms that are her birthright. We pledge to continue this work in partnership with the independent civil society advocates and experts who have led the fight for women's empowerment, as envisioned when the international community convened 20 years ago. And we remind ourselves of all of the noble promises of that conference and rededicate ourselves to making them a reality.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary released a report, "United States Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action," with this statement.

Remarks to the United Nations General Assembly in New York City
September 28, 2015

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, fellow delegates, ladies and gentlemen: Seventy years after the founding of the United Nations, it is worth reflecting on what, together, the members of this body have helped to achieve.

Out of the ashes of the Second World War, having witnessed the unthinkable power of the atomic age, the United States has worked with many nations in this Assembly to prevent a third world war: by forging alliances with old adversaries, by supporting the steady emergence of strong democracies accountable to their people instead of any foreign power, and by building an international system that imposes a cost on those who choose conflict over cooperation, an order that recognizes the dignity and equal worth of all people.

That is the work of seven decades. That is the ideal that this body, at its best, has pursued. Of course, there have been too many times when, collectively, we have fallen short of these ideals. Over seven decades, terrible conflicts have claimed untold victims. But we have pressed forward, slowly, steadily, to make a system of international rules and norms that are better and stronger and more consistent.

It is this international order that has unwritten—underwritten unparalleled advances in human liberty and prosperity. It is this collective endeavor that's brought about diplomatic cooperation between the world's major powers and buttressed a global economy that has lifted more than a billion people from poverty. It is these international principles that have helped constrain bigger countries from imposing our will on smaller ones and advanced the emergence of democracy and development and individual liberty on every continent.

This progress is real. It can be documented in lives saved and agreements forged and diseases conquered and in mouths fed. And yet we come together today knowing that the march of human progress never travels in a straight line, that our work is far from complete; that dangerous currents risk pulling us back into a darker, more disordered world.

Today, we see the collapse of strongmen and fragile states breeding conflict and driving innocent men, women, and children across borders on an epic scale. Brutal networks of terror have stepped into the vacuum. Technologies that empower individuals are now also exploited by those who spread disinformation or suppress dissent or radicalize our youth. Global capital flows have powered growth and investment, but also increased risk of contagion, weakened the bargaining power of workers, and accelerated inequality.

How should we respond to these trends? There are those who argue that the ideals enshrined in the U.N. Charter are unachievable or out of date, a legacy of a postwar era not suited to our own. Effectively, they argue for a return to the rules that applied for most of human history and that predate this institution: the belief that power is a zero-sum game, that might makes right, that strong states must impose their will on weaker ones, that the rights of individuals don't matter, and that in a time of rapid change, order must be imposed by force.

On this basis, we see some major powers assert themselves in ways that contravene international law. We see an erosion of the democratic principles and human rights that are fundamental to this institution's mission; information is strictly controlled, the space for civil society restricted. We're told that such retrenchment is required to beat back disorder, that it's the only way to stamp out terrorism or prevent foreign meddling. In accordance with this logic, we should support tyrants like Bashar al-Asad, who drops barrel bombs to massacre innocent children, because the alternative is surely worse.

The increasing skepticism of our international order can also be found in the most advanced democracies. We see greater polarization; more frequent gridlock; movements on the far right, and sometimes the left, that insist on stopping the trade that binds our fates to other nations, calling for the building of walls

to keep out immigrants. And most ominously, we see the fears of ordinary people being exploited through appeals to sectarianism or tribalism or racism or anti-Semitism; appeals to a glorious past before the body politic was infected by those who look different or worship God differently; a politics of "us" versus "them."

The United States is not immune from this. Even as our economy is growing and our troops have largely returned from Iraq and Afghanistan, we see in our debates about America's role in the world a notion of strength that is defined by opposition to old enemies, perceived adversaries: a rising China or a resurgent Russia, a revolutionary Iran or an Islam that is incompatible with peace. We see an argument made that the only strength that matters for the United States is bellicose words and shows of military force, that cooperation and diplomacy will not work.

As President of the United States, I am mindful of the dangers that we face; they cross my desk every morning. I lead the strongest military that the world has ever known, and I will never hesitate to protect my country or our allies, unilaterally and by force where necessary.

But I stand before you today believing in my core that we, the nations of the world, cannot return to the old ways of conflict and coercion. We cannot look backwards. We live in an integrated world, one in which we all have a stake in each other's success. We cannot turn back those forces of integration. No nation in this Assembly can insulate itself from the threat of terrorism or the risk of financial contagion, the flow of migrants or the danger of a warming planet. The disorder we see is not driven solely by competition between nations or any single ideology. And if we cannot work together more effectively, we will all suffer the consequences. That is true for the United States as well.

No matter how powerful our military, how strong our economy, we understand the United States cannot solve the world's problems alone. In Iraq, the United States learned the hard lesson that even hundreds of thousands of brave, effective troops, trillions of dollars from our Treasury, cannot by itself impose stability on a foreign land. Unless we work with other nations under the mantle of international norms and principles and law that offer legitimacy to our efforts, we will not succeed. And unless we work together to defeat the ideas that drive different communities in a country like Iraq into conflict, any order that our militaries can impose will be temporary.

And just as force alone cannot impose order internationally, I believe in my core that repression cannot forge the social cohesion for nations to succeed. The history of the last two decades proves that in today's world, dictatorships are unstable. The strongmen of today become the spark of revolution tomorrow. You can jail your opponents, but you can't imprison ideas. You can try to control access to information, but you cannot turn a lie into truth. It is not a conspiracy of U.S.-backed NGOs that expose corruption and raise the expectations of people around the globe; it's technology, social media, and the irreducible desire of people everywhere to make their own choices about how they are governed.

Indeed, I believe that in today's world, the measure of strength is no longer defined by the control of territory. Lasting prosperity does not come solely from the ability to access and extract raw materials. The strength of nations depends on the success of their people—their knowledge, their innovation, their imagination, their creativity, their drive, their opportunity—and that, in turn, depends upon individual rights and good governance and personal security. Internal repression and foreign aggression are both symptoms of the failure to provide this foundation.

A politics of—and solidarity that depend on demonizing others, that draws on religious sectarianism or narrow tribalism or jingoism, may at times look like strength in the moment, but over time its weakness will be exposed. And history tells us that the dark forces unleashed by this type of politics surely makes all of us less secure. Our world has been there before. We gain nothing from going back.

Instead, I believe that we must go forward in pursuit of our ideals, not abandon them at this critical time. We must give expression to

our best hopes, not our deepest fears. This institution was founded because men and women who came before us had the foresight to know that our nations are more secure when we uphold basic laws and basic norms and pursue a path of cooperation over conflict. And strong nations, above all, have a responsibility to uphold this international order.

Let me give you a concrete example. After I took office, I made clear that one of the principal achievements of this body—the nuclear nonproliferation regime—was endangered by Iran's violation of the NPT. On that basis, the Security Council tightened sanctions on the Iranian Government, and many nations joined us to enforce them. Together, we showed that laws and agreements mean something.

But we also understood that the goal of sanctions was not simply to punish Iran. Our objective was to test whether Iran could change course, accept constraints, and allow the world to verify that its nuclear program will be peaceful. For 2 years, the United States and our partners—including Russia, including China—stuck together in complex negotiations. The result is a lasting, comprehensive deal that prevents Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, while allowing it to access peaceful energy. And if this deal is fully implemented, the prohibition on nuclear weapons is strengthened, a potential war is averted, our world is safer. That is the strength of the international system when it works the way it should.

That same fidelity to international order guides our responses to other challenges around the world. Consider Russia's annexation of Crimea and further aggression in eastern Ukraine. America has few economic interests in Ukraine. We recognize the deep and complex history between Russia and Ukraine. But we cannot stand by when the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a nation is flagrantly violated. If that happens without consequence in Ukraine, it could happen to any nation gathered here today. That's the basis of the sanctions that the United States and our partners impose on Russia. It's not a desire to return to a cold war.

Now, within Russia, state-controlled media may describe these events as an example of a resurgent Russia—a view shared, by the way, by a number of U.S. politicians and commentators who have always been deeply skeptical of Russia and seem to be convinced a new cold war is, in fact, upon us. And yet look at the results. The Ukrainian people are more interested than ever in aligning with Europe instead of Russia. Sanctions have led to capital flight, a contracting economy, a fallen ruble, and the emigration of more educated Russians.

Imagine if, instead, Russia had engaged in true diplomacy and worked with Ukraine and the international community to ensure its interests were protected. That would be better for Ukraine, but also better for Russia and better for the world, which is why we continue to press for this crisis to be resolved in a way that allows a sovereign and democratic Ukraine to determine its future and control its territory. Not because we want to isolate Russia—we don't—but because we want a strong Russia that's invested in working with us to strengthen the international system as a whole.

Similarly, in the South China Sea, the United States makes no claim on territory there. We don't adjudicate claims. But like every nation gathered here, we have an interest in upholding the basic principles of freedom of navigation and the free flow of commerce and in resolving disputes through international law, not the law of force. So we will defend these principles, while encouraging China and other claimants to resolve their differences peacefully.

I say this recognizing that diplomacy is hard, that the outcomes are sometimes unsatisfying, that it's rarely politically popular. But I believe that leaders of large nations, in particular, have an obligation to take these risks, precisely because we are strong enough to protect our interests if and when diplomacy fails.

I also believe that to move forward in this new era, we have to be strong enough to acknowledge when what you're doing is not working. For 50 years, the United States pursued a Cuba policy that failed to improve the lives of the Cuban people. We changed that. We continue to have differences with the

Cuban Government. We will continue to stand up for human rights. But we address these issues through diplomatic relations and increased commerce and people-to-people ties. As these contacts yield progress, I'm confident that our Congress will inevitably lift an embargo that should not be in place anymore. Change won't come overnight to Cuba, but I'm confident that openness, not coercion, will support the reforms and better the life the Cuban people deserve, just as I believe that Cuba will find its success if it pursues cooperation with other nations.

Now, if it's in the interest of major powers to uphold international standards, it is even more true for the rest of the community of nations. Look around the world. From Singapore to Colombia to Senegal, the facts show that nations succeed when they pursue an inclusive peace and prosperity within their borders and work cooperatively with countries beyond their borders.

That path is now available to a nation like Iran, which, as of this moment, continues to deploy violent proxies to advance its interests. These efforts may appear to give Iran leverage in disputes with neighbors, but they fuel sectarian conflict that endangers the entire region and isolates Iran from the promise of trade and commerce. The Iranian people have a proud history and are filled with extraordinary potential. But chanting "Death to America" does not create jobs or make Iran more secure. If Iran chose a different path, that would be good for the security of the region, good for the Iranian people, and good for the world.

Of course, around the globe, we will continue to be confronted with nations who reject these lessons of history, places where civil strife and border disputes and sectarian wars bring about terrorist enclaves and humanitarian disasters. Where order has completely broken down, we must act, but we will be stronger when we act together.

In such efforts, the United States will always do our part. We will do so mindful of the lessons of the past, not just the lessons of Iraq, but also the example of Libya, where we joined an international coalition under a U.N. mandate to prevent a slaughter. Even as we helped the Libyan people bring an end to the reign of a tyrant, our coalition could have and should have done more to fill a vacuum left behind. We're grateful to the United Nations for its efforts to forge a unity Government. We will help any legitimate Libyan Government as it works to bring the country together. But we also have to recognize that we must work more effectively in the future, as an international community, to build capacity for states that are in distress, before they collapse.

And that's why we should celebrate the fact that later today the United States will join with more than 50 countries to enlist new capabilities—infantry, intelligence, helicopters, hospitals, and tens of thousands of troops—to strengthen United Nations peacekeeping. These new capabilities can prevent mass killing and ensure that peace agreements are more than words on paper. But we have to do it together. Together, we must strengthen our collective capacity to establish security where order has broken down and to support those who seek a just and lasting peace.

Nowhere is our commitment to international order more tested than in Syria. When a dictator slaughters tens of thousands of his own people, that is not just a matter of one nation's internal affairs, it breeds human suffering on an order of magnitude that affects us all. Likewise, when a terrorist group beheads captives, slaughters the innocent and enslaves women, that's not a single nation's national security problem, that is an assault on all our humanity.

I've said before, and I will repeat: There is no room for accommodating an apocalyptic cult like ISIL, and the United States makes no apology for using our military, as part of a broad coalition, to go after them. We do so with a determination to ensure that there will never be a safe haven for terrorists who carry out these crimes. And we have demonstrated over more than a decade of relentless pursuit of Al Qaida, we will not be outlasted by extremists.

But while military power is necessary, it is not sufficient to resolve the situation in Syria. Lasting stability can only take hold when the

people of Syria forge an agreement to live together peacefully. The United States is prepared to work with any nation, including Russia and Iran, to resolve the conflict. But we must recognize that there cannot be, after so much bloodshed, so much carnage, a return to the prewar status quo.

Let's remember how this started. Asad reacted to peaceful protests by escalating repression and killing that, in turn, created the environment for the current strife. And so Asad and his allies cannot simply pacify the broad majority of a population who have been brutalized by chemical weapons and indiscriminate bombing. Yes, realism dictates that compromise will be required to end the fighting and ultimately stamp out ISIL. But realism also requires a managed transition away from Asad and to a new leader and an inclusive Government that recognizes there must be an end to this chaos so that the Syrian people can begin to rebuild.

We know that ISIL, which emerged out of the chaos of Iraq and Syria, depends on perpetual war to survive. But we also know that they gain adherents because of a poisonous ideology. So part of our job, together, is to work to reject such extremism that infects too many of our young people. Part of that effort must be a continued rejection by Muslims of those who distort Islam to preach intolerance and promote violence, and it must also be a rejection by non-Muslims of the ignorance that equates Islam with terror.

This work will take time. There are no easy answers to Syria. And there are no simple answers to the changes that are taking place in much of the Middle East and North Africa. But so many families need help right now; they don't have time. And that's why the United States is increasing the number of refugees who we welcome within our borders. That's why we will continue to be the largest donor of assistance to support those refugees. And today we are launching new efforts to ensure that our people and our businesses, our universities, and our NGOs can help as well, because in the faces of suffering families, our Nation of immigrants sees ourselves.

Of course, in the old ways of thinking, the plight of the powerless, the plight of refugees, the plight of the marginalized did not matter. They were on the periphery of the world's concerns. Today, our concern for them is driven not just by conscience, but should also be driven by self-interest. For helping people who have been pushed to the margins of our world is not mere charity, it is a matter of collective security. And the purpose of this institution is not merely to avoid conflict, it is to galvanize the collective action that makes life better on this planet.

The commitments we've made to the sustainable development goals speak to this truth. I believe that capitalism has been the greater creator of wealth and opportunity that the world has ever known. But from big cities to rural villages around the world, we also know that prosperity is still cruelly out of reach for too many. As His Holiness Pope Francis reminds us, we are stronger when we value the least among these and see them as equal in dignity to ourselves and our sons and our daughters.

We can roll back preventable disease and end the scourge of HIV/AIDS. We can stamp out pandemics that recognize no borders. That work may not be on television right now, but as we demonstrated in reversing the spread of Ebola, it can save more lives than anything else we can do.

Together, we can eradicate extreme poverty and erase barriers to opportunity. But this requires a sustained commitment to our people so farmers can feed more people, so entrepreneurs can start a business without paying a bribe, so young people have the skills they need to succeed in this modern, knowledge-based economy.

We can promote growth through trade that meets a higher standard. And that's what we're doing through the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a trade agreement that encompasses nearly 40 percent of the global economy, an agreement that will open markets, while protecting the rights of workers and protecting the environment that enables development to be sustained.

We can roll back the pollution that we put in our skies and help economies lift people out of poverty without condemning our children to the ravages of an ever-warming climate. The same ingenuity that produced the Industrial Age and the Computer Age allows us to harness the potential of clean energy. No country can escape the ravages of climate change. And there is no stronger sign of leadership than putting future generations first. The United States will work with every nation that is willing to do its part so that we can come together in Paris to decisively confront this challenge.

And finally, our vision for the future of this Assembly, my belief in moving forward rather than backwards, requires us to defend the democratic principles that allow societies to succeed. Let me start from a simple premise: Catastrophes, like what we are seeing in Syria, do not take place in countries where there is genuine democracy and respect for the universal values this institution is supposed to defend.

I recognize that democracy is going to take different forms in different parts of the world. The very idea of a people governing themselves depends upon governing—government giving expression to their unique culture, their unique history, their unique experiences. But some universal truths are self-evident: No person wants to be imprisoned for peaceful worship; no woman should ever be abused with impunity or a girl barred from going to school; the freedom to peacefully petition those in power without fear of arbitrary laws. These are not ideas of one country or one culture. They are fundamental to human progress. They are a cornerstone of this institution.

I realize that in many parts of the world there is a different view: a belief that strong leadership must tolerate no dissent. I hear it not only from America's adversaries, but privately, at least, I also hear it from some of our friends. I disagree. I believe a government that suppresses peaceful dissent is not showing strength; it is showing weakness, and it is showing fear. History shows that regimes who fear their own people will eventually crumble, but strong institutions built on the consent of the governed endure long after any one individual is gone.

That's why our strongest leaders, from George Washington to Nelson Mandela, have elevated the importance of building strong, democratic institutions over a thirst for perpetual power. Leaders who amend constitutions to stay in office only acknowledge that they failed to build a successful country for their people. Because none of us lasts forever. It tells us that power is something they cling to for its own sake, rather than for the betterment of those they purport to serve.

I understand democracy is frustrating. Democracy in the United States is certainly imperfect. At times, it can be dysfunctional. But democracy—the constant struggle to extend rights to more of our people, to give more people a voice—is what allowed us to become the most powerful nation in the world.

It's not simply a matter of principle; it's not an abstraction. Democracy—inclusive democracy—makes countries stronger. When opposition parties can seek power peacefully through the ballot, a country draws upon new ideas. When a free media can inform the public, corruption and abuse are exposed and can be rooted out. When civil society thrives, communities can solve problems that governments cannot necessarily solve alone. When immigrants are welcomed, countries are more productive and more vibrant. When girls can go to school and get a job and pursue unlimited opportunity, that's when a country realizes its full potential.

That is what I believe is America's greatest strength. Not everybody in America agrees with me, but that's part of democracy. I believe that the fact that you can walk the streets of this city right now and pass churches and synagogues and temples and mosques, where people worship freely; the fact that our Nation of immigrants mirrors the diversity of the world—you can find everybody from everywhere here in New York City—the fact that, in this country, everybody can contribute, everybody can participate, no matter who they are or what they look like or who they love, that's what makes us strong.

And I believe that what is true for America is true for virtually all mature democracies. And that is no accident. We can be proud of our nations without defining ourselves in opposition to some other group. We can be patriotic without demonizing someone else. We can cherish our own identities—our religion, our ethnicity, our traditions—without putting others down. Our systems are premised on the notion that absolute power will corrupt, but that people—ordinary people—are fundamentally good; that they value family and friendship, faith and the dignity of hard work; and that with appropriate checks and balances, governments can reflect this goodness.

I believe that's the future we must seek together. To believe in the dignity of every individual, to believe we can bridge our differences and choose cooperation over conflict—that is not weakness, that is strength. It is a practical necessity in this interconnected world.

And our people understand this. Think of the Liberian doctor who went door to door to search for Ebola cases and to tell families what to do if they show symptoms. Think of the Iranian shopkeeper who said, after the nuclear deal, "God willing, now we'll be able to offer many more goods at better prices." Think of the Americans who lowered the flag over our Embassy in Havana in 1961—the year I was born—and returned this summer to raise that flag back up. One of these men said of the Cuban people: "We could do things for them, and they could do things for us. We loved them." For 50 years, we ignored that fact.

Think of the families leaving everything they've known behind, risking barren deserts and stormy waters just to find shelter, just to save their children. One Syrian refugee who was greeted in Hamburg with warm greetings and shelter said, "We feel there are still some people who love other people."

The people of our United Nations are not as different as they are told. They can be made to fear, they can be taught to hate, but they can also respond to hope. History is littered with the failure of false prophets and fallen empires who believed that might always makes right, and that will continue to be the case. You can count on that. But we are called upon to offer a different type of leadership, leadership strong enough to recognize that nations share common interests and people share a common humanity and, yes, there are certain ideas and principles that are universal.

That's what those who shaped the United Nations 70 years ago understood. Let us carry forward that faith into the future, for it is the only way we can assure that future will be brighter for my children and for yours.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:18 a.m. at United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Sam Kahamba Kutesa, President, 69th Session of the U.N. General Assembly; Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations; President Bashar al-Asad of Syria; and Francis "Mike" East, Larry C. Morris, and Jim Tracy, former U.S. marines who raised the flag for the U.S. Embassy reopening in Havana, Cuba, on August 14. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations in New York City
September 28, 2015

Good afternoon. As always, this lunch comes right after I have spoken. And I think the Secretary-General designs it that way to keep me brief.

You've heard enough from me already today. I do want to take this opportunity to welcome all of you once again to the United States and New York City, as we mark the 70th anniversary of this institution. And I want to thank all of you for the work that we have done together.

In particular, I want to thank our Secretary-General for his outstanding work. Mr.

Secretary-General, you have helped to mobilize the world around a host of urgent challenges: humanitarian disasters, our new sustainable development goals, and climate change. I value your friendship. I value your counsel. I'm glad you think that we're all lucky to have this many challenges. [*Laughter*] I don't know if you personally always feel that way. But because of your tireless work, the world is a better place. We very much appreciate you.

One of the Secretary-General's predecessors, Dag Hammarskjold, once said, "The pursuit of peace and progress, with its trials and its errors, its successes and its setbacks, can never be relaxed and can never be abandoned." Over the past seven decades, we've witnessed this institution's enormous power to resolve conflicts and protect the world's vulnerable people, to strengthen international cooperation, including between former adversaries. But we are facing extraordinary challenges today, ones that test our capacity to work together: humanitarian crises, challenges to the international order, threats to human rights. And so our ability to come together as the United Nations is being tested once again.

When I think about the true measure of our success going forward, the opportunities that we create for our people, the security that we provide them, our ability to address terrorism or the ravages of climate change, I feel optimistic that we can tackle these problems if we all work together. And this institution will be critical in order for us to achieve those goals.

There is no problem that man has caused that man cannot solve if we are bold enough, deploy our imagination, have the political will, and recognize our common humanity. That's what the United Nations is about. That's what our Secretary-General has been about.

And I want to propose a toast: To all of our nations, to the United Nations, to the people that we represent and to whom we have responsibilities towards. Amid the inevitable trials and setbacks, may we never relax in our pursuit of progress, and may we never abandon the pursuit of peace.

Cheers.

[*At this point, the President offered a toast.*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:52 p.m. in the North Delegates' Lounge at United Nations Headquarters.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India in New York City
September 28, 2015

President Obama. Well, it is a great pleasure to meet once again with my good friend, Prime Minister Modi. Our meeting builds on the progress that was made during the wonderful visit that I was able to make to India, to the Prime Minister's invitation, and the historic participation that I had with Republic Day. We've elevated our ties. We've committed ourselves to a new partnership between our two countries. And there's been excellent follow-through on a whole range of issues.

Much of our discussion today focused on the upcoming climate conference in Paris. We agreed that this is a critical issue for the world; that all of us have responsibilities. We are encouraged by the aggressive nature of President [Prime Minister]* Modi's commitment to clean energy. And what I indicated to the Prime Minister is that I really think that India's leadership in this upcoming conference will set the tone not just for today, but for decades to come. And I have great confidence in our ability to partner with other large countries like China and the European Union's efforts in order for us to really solve this problem in a significant way that will help not just our people,

* White House correction.

but I think can actually be an engine of growth over the long term.

We also had a chance to talk about trade and investment, where our governments and business leaders met again last week to forge new partnerships to create jobs and opportunities for Indians and Americans. Prime Minister Modi has called on the Indian diaspora in the United States, which is very large and very successful, to contribute their talents to India's progress. And that's something that we welcome.

And we discussed how we can further refine our strategic vision—our common joint vision—moving forward for security and partnerships. And that encompasses everything from scientific exchanges and educational exchanges to security cooperation and defense procurement. On all these issues, the Prime Minister has been an outstanding partner, and it reflects the fact that as the two largest democracies in the world—or two of the largest democracies in the world, we have an opportunity to help to define a common set of principles that are consistent with what the United Nations believes and are consistent with what both India's and the United States' founders believed: that governments are there to serve their people and to provide uplift and prosperity to everyone. And in my interactions with Prime Minister Modi, I have to say that those ideals are ones that he not only gives lip service to, but he also acts on. And so we very much appreciate his friendship and his partnership.

Prime Minister Modi. President Obama, members of the media, it is a great pleasure to meet President Obama in New York. Thank you for your hosting this meeting. I deeply value our friendship and your vision and commitment for the relationship between our two countries.

We have achieved significant progress in our bilateral cooperation and international partnership. I was in Silicon Valley over the weekend; I experienced the strength of American innovation and enterprise that provide the foundation of American success. I also saw the driving force of our relationship—youth, technology, and innovation—and the natural partnership of Indian and Americans in advancing human progress.

California also reminds us that India and the United States are part of the dynamic Asia-Pacific region. Amid the problems that world faces today and the global challenges that we see ahead, our partnership is a great significance for us and our world. We can apply innovation and technology by achieving sustainable development goals, including combating climate change and conserving nature.

President and I share an uncompromising commitment on climate change without affecting our ability to meet the development aspirations of humanity. We have both set ambitious national agendas. In India, our major include not just a plan to have 175 gigawatt of renewable energy by 2022, but a development strategy that will enable us to transition to a more sustainable energy mix. This is an exercise we are undertaking in the spirit of our culture and tradition, but also because of our commitment to the future of this planet. Our extraordinary bilateral partnership in the energy sector focus on clean and renewable energy and energy efficiency.

I also thank President Obama for his positive response to my call for a global public partnership for developing affordable clean energy source. And that will enable faster adoption of clean energy across the world. We should work together to advance the goal. And it is equally important to develop mechanisms to ensure that the affordable also become accessible to those who need it the most.

We look forward to comprehensive and concrete outcome in Paris with a positive agenda on combating climate change which also focuses on access to finance and technology for the developing world, especially the poor countries and small island states.

I thank President Obama for U.S. support for India's permanent membership of a reformed U.N. Security Council. I also sought U.S. support to complete the reform process within a fixed frame—timeframe. I expressed our appreciation for continued U.S. support for India's membership of the international

export control regimes within our targeted timeframe.

Our partnership addresses a broad range of strategic and security concerns. Our defense cooperation, including defense training, is expanding. As extrinsic terrorism threats grow and new ones emerge, we have resolved to further deepen cooperation on counterterrorism and radicalism.

We have just had a successful cybersecurity dialogue. We have agreed to further strengthen our consultation and cooperation on helping the Afghan people combat terrorism and build a peaceful, stable, and prosperous future of their nation.

I welcome the progress in giving shape to our joint strategic vision on our Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean region and also our joint engagement with regional partners like Japan. This will also strengthen our maritime security cooperation. To further increase our strategic engagement in the region, I look forward to work with the U.S. for India's early membership of Asian-Pacific economic community.

Our economic partnership is a key driver of our relationship. I had an excellent meeting with business leaders in New York and San Jose. I'm very pleased with the confidence in India, and value their constructive feedback and suggestions. We will also continue to work towards a stronger bilateral framework of economic cooperation, including the bilateral investment treaty and totalization agreement.

This meeting and my engagement in the U.S. demonstrate the extraordinary depth and diversity of our relationship. Our meeting today was very productive in advancing some of our immediate priorities and also our broader strategic partnership.

Thank you.

President Obama. Thank you, my friend.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:19 p.m. in Conference Room C at United Nations Headquarters.

Remarks at the United Nations Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping in New York City

September 28, 2015

Good afternoon. Mr. Secretary-General, heads of state and government, distinguished representatives: The word "peacekeeping" does not appear in the Charter of the United Nations. But for the past seven decades, our collective ability to "maintain international peace and security" has often depended on the willingness of courageous U.N. peacekeepers to put their lives on the line in war-torn corners of the world.

Over the years—from El Salvador to Namibia, from Liberia to Timor-Leste—more than 1 million men and women in blue helmets have prevented violence and preserved peace. They have saved lives. They've given societies a chance to rebuild. Through bitter experience, in places like Bosnia and Rwanda, we've learned painful lessons, and we've worked to do better. Right now, as we speak, more than 100,000 troops and police are deployed around the world: training police in Haiti, promoting stability in Lebanon, protecting civilians in South Sudan. And down the decades, more than 3,300 peacekeepers, as well as many police and civilian staff, have made the ultimate sacrifice. The United Nations and the United States salutes them all.

We know that peace operations are not the solution to every problem, but they do remain one of the world's most important tools to address armed conflict. And I called for this summit because U.N. peacekeeping operations are experiencing unprecedented strains. Old challenges persist: Too few nations bear a disproportionate burden of providing troops, which is unsustainable. Atop this, we've seen new challenges: more armed conflicts, more instability driven by terrorism and violent extremism, and more refugees.

As a consequence, peacekeepers head into more difficult and deadlier conflicts. They're given ambitious mandates and charged with in-

creasingly dangerous and complex missions. Just yesterday, a U.N. peacekeeper was killed in Darfur, and we've seen reports today of a tragic incident in the Central African Republic. Put simply, the supply of well-trained, well-equipped peacekeepers can't keep up with the growing demand.

So we are here today, together, to strengthen and reform U.N. peacekeeping because our common security demands it. This is not something that we do for others, this is something that we do collectively because our collective security depends on it.

As the largest financial contributor to the U.N. peacekeeping operations, the United States intends to continue to do its part. And today I'm issuing new Presidential guidance—the first in more than 20 years—to expand our support for U.N. peace operations. Like the nations participating today, we'll pledge additional resources. We'll work to double the number of U.S. military officers serving in peacekeeping operations. We will offer logistical support, including our unrivaled network of air- and sealift. When there's an urgent need and we're uniquely positioned to help, we'll undertake engineering projects like building airfields and base camps for new missions. And we'll step up our efforts to help build the U.N.'s capacity, from identifying state-of-the-art technology to offering training to protection against IEDs.

And together, there's much more we need to do together. So let me briefly suggest several key areas where we can focus.

First, more nations need to contribute more forces. We are joined today by countries from every region of the world. And I want to thank those who already do so much, and commend those who have come here prepared to do more. At this summit, more than 50 countries—from Bangladesh to Colombia, from Finland to China—are making commitments totaling more than 30,000 new troops and police. And they're stepping up with critical contributions like medical units, helicopters, and capabilities to counter IEDs, which will help peacekeepers be able to stay safe and succeed in their missions. This all represents significant progress, and over the coming years, I believe more nations can make even more contributions.

Second, we need to improve the protection of civilians. Unlike 20 years ago, today's U.N. peacekeepers have the clear authority to safeguard the innocent, but it is still applied unevenly. That's why the principles and best practices for civilian protection laid out in Kigali are so important. Because for innocent people caught in the crossfire in places like South Sudan, the actions of U.N. peacekeepers can mean the difference between life and death.

At the same time, we have to candidly acknowledge that abuse by peacekeepers has to end. I want to be very clear: The overwhelming number of peacekeepers serve with honor and decency in extraordinarily difficult situations. But we have seen some appalling cases of peacekeepers abusing civilians—including rape and sexual assault—and that is totally unacceptable. It's an affront to human decency. It undermines the core mission because it erodes trust with communities. It has a corrosive effect on global confidence in peacekeeping itself.

So, Mr. Secretary-General, we commend you for leading on this issue and insisting on accountability, and we know you cannot solve this problem alone. As leaders and as an international community, we have to insist on zero tolerance for abuse—zero.

Third, we need to reform and modernize peace operations because today's complex conflicts demand it. And that means putting in place the highest caliber, merit-based leadership teams for every single mission. It means making sure we get more women leaders into critical roles. It means planning the rules for operations in the field and not in conference rooms.

Our goal should be to make every new peace operation more efficient and more effective than the last. Beyond strengthening U.N. peacekeeping, the United States also supports developing new and deeper partnerships between the U.N. and the African Union to provide reliable support for AU peace operations.

And we look forward to hearing concrete proposals from our African partners to advance this work.

Finally, we need to increase our support of the full range of U.N. diplomatic tools—including mediation, Envoys, and special political missions—which help us to prevent conflicts in the first place. We cannot expect peacekeeping operations to succeed unless the parties involved are willing and committed to making peace.

Now, if we do all these things, if we provide the support and embrace the reforms that I've described today, I believe we can strengthen peace operations for decades to come. Because we know—we can be certain—that in the years ahead, as conflicts arise, the call will go out to those men and women in blue helmets to restore calm and to keep the peace and to save lives. And when they go, their success and their lives will depend on whether they have the training and the forces and the capabilities and the global support they need to succeed in their mission. The decisions and the commitments we make today can help ensure that they do.

I want to thank all of you for your partnership and the commitments that your nations are making here. We will hear some extraordinary commitments from a number of nations. And we are very proud that the international community has responded to this call in such a significant way. Rest assured that, in this critical work, the United States will be a strong partner to all of you.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:09 p.m. in the Trusteeship Council Chamber at United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations.

Joint Statement—Declaration of United Nations Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping

September 28, 2015

The Governments of Armenia, Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ethiopia, Finland, Fiji, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Turkey, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand, Ukraine, United States, United Kingdom, Uruguay, and Vietnam jointly declare their support for the following:

As the United Nations marks its seventieth anniversary, we recognize that, for sixty-seven years, its Member States have called and depended upon United Nations peacekeeping operations to help maintain international peace and security around the world. Since 1948, UN peacekeeping has evolved through tragedy and triumph to meet new security threats and challenges as the world itself, and environments in which peacekeepers are deployed, has changed dramatically. We salute the sacrifices of the brave peacekeepers, who deploy to volatile and dangerous locations throughout the world to serve humanity and the cause of peace. Today, we celebrate the essential role that UN peacekeeping plays in bringing security, hope and peace to millions of people, redouble our efforts to ensure that peacekeeping operations succeed in meeting this challenge and underscore our commitment to the highest standards of professionalism and conduct.

We believe that the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations is the responsibility of all Member States and relies particularly on partnerships among the Security Council, Troop and Police Contributing Countries, financial contributors, host countries, the UN Secretariat and regional organizations. We, therefore, welcome the convening of the regional meetings on peacekeeping held in Ethiopia, Indonesia, Rwanda, the Netherlands and

Uruguay, with the aim of strengthening cooperation among relevant actors, as well as contributing to improving the UN peacekeeping architecture overall. We underscore the need to enhance consultations between the members of the Security Council and relevant Member States contributing personnel to UN peacekeeping operations to seek a shared understanding of the mandates and a common commitment to their implementation.

Today, we recommit ourselves to modernizing UN peacekeeping operations to ensure their success. We are committed to doing our part to further strengthen peacekeeping, underscored by the additional significant commitments to UN peacekeeping announced today, which will help meet persistent capacity gaps, improve the performance and capabilities of uniformed personnel, support rapid deployment and reinforce and enhance the foundation for future peacekeeping efforts. To achieve this goal, we also call on Member States to join us in making additional commitments to UN peacekeeping.

These contributions must be accompanied by reforms in how UN peacekeeping is organized and supported. We welcome the efforts to advance the cause of reform through the report of the Secretary-General, entitled "The Future of Peace Operations: Implementation of the Recommendations of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations," and the report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (hereinafter, "the Panel") and look forward to discussing the Secretary-General's recommendations, where applicable, in an appropriate intergovernmental forum. We underscore the need for a truly integrated mission planning and assessment process that fuses operations and logistics with political goals; strengthened evaluation of operational readiness and performance; improved human resources management and procurement practices that enable missions to deploy more quickly, effectively and flexibly; intelligence capabilities, which identify threats to UN personnel and facilitate the effective implementation of mandates; capable and accountable leadership in peacekeeping operations and merit-based leadership selection, with due consideration for geographical representation; and a more effective peace and security bureaucracy at the UN Headquarters. We stress the need to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in UN peacekeeping.

We affirm that proper conduct by, and discipline over, all personnel deployed in UN peacekeeping operations are vital to their effectiveness. In particular, sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers, including all civilian staff deployed to UN peacekeeping operations, against anyone is unacceptable. We reaffirm our support for the UN "zero tolerance" policy on all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse. We call on the Secretary-General to continue to strengthen the Organization's prevention, enforcement and remediation efforts. We are committed to taking serious and concerted action to combat sexual exploitation and abuse, including rigorous vetting and training of uniformed personnel to be deployed to UN peacekeeping operations, as well as swift and thorough investigations, appropriate accountability measures and timely reporting to the United Nations on all incidents.

We underline that the protection of civilians is a solemn responsibility we all share. Failure to protect civilians not only risks lives, but also undermines the credibility and legitimacy of UN peacekeeping. We are committed to ensuring that our uniformed personnel deployed in peacekeeping operations are properly trained on UN policies and guidance on the protection of civilians, including on the use of force consistent with the operation's mandate and rules of engagement. We underline our commitment to investigate and, as appropriate, discipline uniformed personnel if they fail to fulfill their mandate to protect civilians. In this regard, we take note of the initiative by Member States to develop, as relevant, the best practices set out in the Kigali Principles.

We express our firm commitment to the safety and security of UN peacekeepers. We note with concern the evolving threats they face working in dangerous environments. We underscore the critical importance of strengthening

casualty response. We call on all Member States and the UN to prioritize the generation of capabilities in these areas, to work to ensure the availability and appropriate control over aviation assets to improve medical evacuation and to strengthen UN standards of emergency care. We underscore the importance of respect for the freedom of movement of UN peacekeepers. We call on host countries to cooperate fully with, and provide unhindered access to, UN peacekeepers to enable them to carry out their duties, in accordance with their mandates.

We acknowledge the critical role played by subregional and regional organizations in confronting some of the world's most difficult stabilization challenges, and underscore our commitment to supporting deeper partnerships and cooperation between the UN and such regional organizations to address threats to international peace and security. We underscore that UN peacekeeping operations are a means to support sustainable political solutions to armed conflicts and to contribute to the conditions for durable peace. We highlight that UN peacekeeping operations are most effective when they support an end to violent conflicts, shore up the confidence of all parties to pursue the peaceful resolution of disputes and aid in advancing the cause of peace. We affirm the primary importance of efforts to mitigate and prevent conflict, including through the use of UN mediation, good offices and special political missions.

NOTE: The joint statement referred to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Memorandum on United States Support to United Nations Peace Operations
September 28, 2015

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: United States Support to United Nations Peace Operations

As articulated in the 2015 National Security Strategy, the United States has a critical national security interest in mitigating state fragility and preventing, containing, and resolving armed conflict. There are currently dozens of fragile and conflict-affected states. Their numbers are now rising globally, and may continue to do so over the next decade or more. Left unassisted, many of these fragile states, where conflict festers and development stagnates, could become hosts of violent extremism; afford safe havens that transnational terrorists and criminals exploit; generate large flows of refugees and displaced persons that can destabilize neighboring countries and sow regional instability; create humanitarian emergencies; facilitate the spread of pandemic disease; and increase the risk of mass atrocities. The United States has a compelling national security interest in preventing the outbreak, escalation, and spread of conflicts that could contribute to these threats, but we cannot and should not seek to assume that burden on our own. To the contrary, it is in our interest to strengthen international response mechanisms that enable the burden to be shared globally.

Multilateral peace operations, particularly United Nations (UN) peace operations, will, therefore, continue to be among the primary international tools that we use to address conflict-related crises. These operations include a spectrum of conflict prevention, peacemaking, and peacebuilding interventions authorized by the UN Security Council. The scale and scope of activities they now perform have expanded significantly since the issuance of the last formal Presidential guidance on multilateral peace operations (Presidential Decision Directive–25 of May 3, 1994). This memorandum takes into account evolutions in UN peace operations over the last two decades. PDD–25 remains in effect to the extent it does not conflict with this memorandum.

Today, personnel in UN peace operations mediate among local, regional, and international stakeholders to prevent the outbreak, re-

sumption, or spread of fighting. They promote confidence-building measures to help a peace process take root. They help implement peace agreements or cease-fires, including through monitoring of and voluntary disarmament and demobilization of combatants. Many UN peace operations enable the delivery of humanitarian and development assistance. They can play an important and direct role in protecting civilians, including from sexual and gender-based violence, and in human rights monitoring. They support the conduct of elections and build host government capacity to govern effectively, including by promoting human rights and the rule of law. Where applicable, UN peace operations support the monitoring and implementation of multilateral sanctions and justice and accountability mechanisms, which include the investigation and prosecution of atrocity crimes. In select and exceptional cases, UN peace operations even conduct offensive military operations against armed groups that act as spoilers outside of a peace process, seek to thwart the implementation of peace agreements, threaten weak but legitimate governments, and perpetrate violence and atrocities against civilians.

United Nations peace operations have now reached all-time high levels of cost, complexity, and risk—and the international demand for them is only growing. The UN currently manages 16 peacekeeping missions, with more than 100,000 uniformed personnel and more than 19,000 civilian staff deployed globally. The UN also currently has 11 field-based political missions and peace-building support offices in Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia. In addition, the African Union and African sub-regional organizations have recently deployed UN Security Council-authorized missions to Somalia, Mali, and the Central African Republic in advance of or alongside UN peace operations.

United Nations and regional peace operations face significant challenges. Nevertheless, these operations are among the most meaningful forms of international burden-sharing to address the global challenges that exist today. More than 120 countries now contribute military or police personnel for UN peace operations, and all military units today are provided by countries other than the United States. In some instances, these operations are deployed in countries such as Haiti and Liberia, where in the absence of a UN peacekeeping operation, historic and other ties might have led to longer-term deployment of U.S. forces that would entail far greater risks and costs for the United States. The United States derives other indirect benefits from our support to UN peace operations, including strengthened military-to-military collaboration, diplomatic, and other ties with countries to which we provide training. United States military, police, and civilian personnel deployed within these missions gain indispensable field experience working alongside personnel from many other nations. Military forces in UN-led peace operations can also replace national or coalition military forces in operations once an area has transitioned from an immediate crisis to a more permissive environment.

The United States has compelling reasons to support the effective conduct of UN and other multilateral peace operations, but must be judicious about where we advocate their establishment since they are not the appropriate response in all instances. For instance, UN peace operations are not ordinarily designed and equipped to deploy into situations of active armed conflict where the main protagonists (and their external backers) are not yet ready to stop fighting. Even when there is a partial peace in place, UN peacekeepers can face severe difficulties when opposed and overmatched by well-armed and organized adversaries seeking to deny their involvement and presence. As such, peace operations cannot substitute for diplomatic solutions to end a war, nor for more forceful military interventions that need to be carried out in non-permissive environments by individual states or coalitions that possess the will and capacity to do so. Nor should UN peace operations be treated as the sum total of the necessary international assistance to fragile and conflict-affected states. Such states usually require a broad range of political, economic, development, and security assistance provided by many

different international actors, well before peacekeepers arrive, throughout the time they remain in theater, and long after they depart.

Our support for UN peace operations also must entail a consistent and constructively critical review of their shortcomings and where systemic reform is required. It is in that spirit that we will work with other UN member states to evaluate and implement the recommendations of the UN Secretary-General's High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations. This Panel recognized in its 2015 report that UN and regional peace operations face a number of critical structural, bureaucratic, operational, and political challenges that need to be addressed to maximize their effectiveness in a complex and changing conflict landscape.

The United States is well positioned to play a leading role in driving reform and shaping the future of UN peace operations, working closely with the UN and with partners in every region. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, we play a key role in crafting and authorizing each operation's mandate. As the top financial contributor to UN peacekeeping, we scrutinize each mission budget and the regulations, rules, and policies that govern the allocation and oversight of resources. As the top provider of training and equipment for military and police contingents, we have a role to play in promoting the highest standards of conduct and discipline. Ultimately, the United States has both significant interests in, and influence on, multilateral peace operations and the systems that support them.

Accordingly, building on the 2015 National Security Strategy, the 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review, and the 2015 National Military Strategy, it shall be the policy of the United States to strengthen and modernize UN peace operations. We shall do so principally through three core lines of effort:

A. Building partner capacity to support UN peace operations;

B. Contributing U.S. diplomatic support, enabling capabilities, and personnel; and

C. Leading and supporting efforts at the UN for systemic reform.

All executive departments and agencies will ensure that the Presidential priority the United States attaches to effective multilateral peace operations, and these core lines of effort for supporting that objective, are appropriately reflected in national strategy, policy, and planning guidance documents. As we pursue the core lines of effort (and associated actions) outlined below, U.S. policy will continue to be to fulfill our treaty obligations to the UN by paying our assessed dues in full and on time.

A. Building partner capacity.

Subject to applicable law, U.S. efforts to build partner capacity will be guided by the following division of labor, prioritization, and general principles:

- *Conflict Mediation and Resolution.* The Department of State will increase U.S. support, including by seeking increased funding, for UN mediation, preventive diplomacy, and other conflict prevention and resolution capacity-building activities, recognizing that UN peace operations can rarely be successfully mounted or terminated in the absence of viable political processes and sustainable solutions.

- *Leadership.* The Department of State and the U.S. Mission to the UN, in coordination with the Department of Defense in the case of military personnel, will attach high priority to working with the UN, troop contributing countries (TCCs), and police contributing countries (PCCs) to ensure strong civilian, military, and police leadership teams are in place in every peace operation, absent which efforts to improve operational capacity will not succeed.

- *Well-trained and well-equipped high quality military forces.* The Department of State, in coordination with the Department of Defense, will prioritize the need to develop, for UN and regional peace

operations, skilled, deployment-ready, high quality forces and enablers, with capable leadership at the contingent, brigade, battalion, and company levels. United States peacekeeper training and other peacekeeping support programs will continue to be calibrated with these priorities in mind. Such U.S. capacity-building efforts will be consistent with Presidential Policy Directive–23 of April 5, 2013, on Security Sector Assistance.

- The Department of State will seek to increase funding for programs, as appropriate, to support U.S. efforts to enhance TCC capability consistent with the needs articulated by the UN.
- The Department of State, in coordination with the Department of Defense, will focus on ways to increase the ability of TCCs to provide critical enabling capabilities and support functions, including maintenance and sustainment of provided equipment.
- The Departments of State and Defense will work together to ensure the various security sector assistance programs they are undertaking are being appropriately leveraged to help meet critical capabilities gaps faced by peace operations and the host government security forces to which peacekeepers must ultimately transfer responsibilities. Both departments will also deepen cooperation with foreign partners on peacekeeping capacity-building efforts to mobilize additional resources for this enterprise and reduce redundancies in its implementation by multiple donors.

- *Gender diversity.* All executive departments and agencies will promote gender diversity in leadership teams, and will work closely with our UN and international partners to promote gender diversity in the leadership ranks (and all levels) of UN peace operations.
- *Joint Exercises.* The Department of Defense will conduct regular military exercises with invited TCCs that feature preparing for peace operations as a major component. In select cases, the Department of Defense will deepen military-to-military relations and security cooperation with committed TCCs as an incentive for them to enhance contributions.
- *Police.* The Department of State and the U.S. Mission to the UN will work with the UN and PCCs to expand the pool of police contributing countries ready and able rapidly to deploy Formed Police Units and Individual Police Officers with specialized skills needed by UN peace operations. United States assistance to PCCs will prioritize the elements required for timely deployment and effective performance, including: doctrine, recruitment and selection, training, leadership, command and control, equipment, logistics and maintenance, and accountability mechanisms. We will emphasize the development of the capacity of PCCs to prepare and sustain independently police deployments, including to meet operational requirements.
- *Joint training, assessment, planning, and doctrine development.* The Departments of State and Defense will seek to make available to the UN, regional organizations, TCCs, and PCCs, upon request and as appropriate, U.S. expertise gained as a global leader in pre-deployment training, leadership education and training, joint planning, and doctrine development and implementation. This will include remaining ready to provide current or increasing levels of assistance in the following areas, to the extent permissible under domestic law: building standards of training and performance of troop and police contingents; providing assessment, planning, and analytic support to UN peace operations; strengthening the UN's ability to plan and train for scenarios and contingencies that occur in conflict-zones; and

developing and sharing U.S. doctrine and training on the protection of civilians in peace operations.

- *High performance standards.* The Department of State will prioritize support for professional TCCs and PCCs that have demonstrated the will to implement UN Security Council mandates, including those for the protection of civilians, with full respect for the human rights and safety of individual members of civilian populations. The United States remains committed to the promotion and protection of human rights. The Department of State vets potential foreign security force-unit recipients of U.S.-funded training, equipment, or other assistance, consistent with applicable law, and the United States restricts the provision of such assistance to units for which it has credible information that such units have committed a gross violation of human rights. Additionally, the Departments of State and Defense will strongly consider withholding, suspending, or reducing peacekeeping capacity-building assistance from those TCCs and PCCs that repeatedly field non-performing units. The Departments of State and Defense will directly raise non-performance with the TCCs and PCCs concerned in diplomatic, defense, and military-to-military engagements. The United States will also continue to support strongly the repatriation by the UN and TCCs and PCCs of non-performing and poorly performing contingents. At the same time, the United States also believes that the UN should work more closely with TCCs and PCCs to ensure the missions and mandated tasks their troops are asked to assume are better aligned with their levels of risk tolerance.

- *Accountability and oversight.* The Departments of State and Defense, as well as the U.S. Mission to the UN, will work with the UN and regional organizations to achieve heightened accountability and recognition for troop and police performance. The United States will continue to support an active mechanism that conducts regular, critical, and independent monitoring and evaluation of missions' performance and efficiencies; the adequacy of pre-deployment training and readiness; additional financial incentives and disincentives relating to performance; and significantly enhanced structures and measures to address sexual exploitation, trafficking, abuse, and corruption to help safeguard the security, safety, and human rights of local populations.

- *Ending Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA).* The United States fully supports the UN's zero tolerance policy against SEA by UN personnel and supports aggressive action by the Secretary General to root it out of peacekeeping, including by strengthening mechanisms for investigating SEA allegations. The Departments of State and Defense will ensure that any U.S.-provided peacekeeping training includes a component on the prevention of SEA. They will condition peacekeeping training or related assistance on the commitment of the TCCs and PCCs to ensure that adequate disciplinary measures for SEA violations exist. In cases in which TCCs and PCCs lack the capacity either to investigate credible allegations or hold those responsible to account for alleged SEA by their own nationals, the United States Government will explore means to assist them in doing so, including through capacity building. The Departments of State and Defense will engage the UN and TCCs and PCCs at senior levels to stress the imperative of investigating allegations thoroughly and prosecuting where appropriate. The Department of State will discourage the UN from deploying uniformed personnel from those TCCs and PCCs that routinely block investigations or fail to hold those responsible for SEA to account and will identify such TCCs and PCCs in its annual country reports on human rights.

- *Force Generation for Key Gaps.* The Departments of State and Defense and the U.S. Mission to the UN will urge, through senior-level engagement in diplomatic and defense channels, fulfillment of commitments made by member states and the UN at the 2014 UN Summit on Peacekeeping Operations and 2015 Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping and at future high-level engagements; encourage, in partnership with the UN, capable militaries and police forces to increase their participation in UN peace operations and contributions of needed capabilities, in particular those that enable UN peace operations to protect civilians and implement robust mandates; elevate requests for TCC and PCC contributions in our regular diplomatic, defense, and military-to-military engagement with our allies and partners, including annual dialogues; and intensify efforts to increase the number of female military and police personnel in UN missions.
- *Partnerships with Regional Organizations.* The Department of State will intensify consultations with relevant international partners on how the UN and other organizations—including the African Union, the European Union, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization—can better cooperate in expanding the collective pool of high caliber, rapidly deployable troops and police for UN and other multilateral peace operations. These consultations should also include identifying where non-UN bridging forces may be required to establish the conditions for follow-on UN missions.

B. Contributing U.S. diplomatic support, enabling capabilities, and U.S. personnel.

In addition to the capability-building efforts outlined above, the United States will also seek to provide direct contributions and enabling support to UN peace operations. The United States Government will review its authorities and funding to support these lines of effort. Our immediate priorities for such support—which take into account existing U.S. global commitments to fulfill our top national security requirements, our areas of comparative advantage, and the UN's priority needs—will be in the following areas:

- *Support for Conflict Prevention and Resolution.* To ensure that the United States can most effectively drive, support, and partner with others in advancing peace processes that result in the success and drawdown of peace operations, we must strengthen our own capacity for conflict prevention and resolution, including through mediation. The Department of State will take additional steps, as feasible within the legal framework of the Department's personnel system to ensure that ambassadors serving in countries hosting UN peace operations receive appropriate training to serve as mediators and otherwise promote conflict resolution; to develop a cadre of personnel skilled in conflict prevention and resolution, including by crediting tours that involve close work with UN peace operations and supporting career paths with assignments in multiple conflict-affected countries where multilateral peace operations are deployed; and to develop a roster of U.S. envoys and officers for conflict prevention and resolution purposes to serve in a U.S. or international capacity. The Department of State will also increase its efforts to build internal institutional capacity for strong and systematic support to U.S. ambassadors and missions in conflict-affected countries, capture best practices and outside expertise on mediation and other techniques of conflict prevention and resolution, and strengthen links with UN and regional organizations' standing capacities to engage in such efforts.
- *Technological and other enabling support.* The United States will, consistent with our national security interests, authorities,

and available resources, increase the provision of material support to the UN. In particular, the United States will seek to become a leading "technology contributing country" to UN peace operations. The Departments of State and Defense will seek to assist the UN, regional organizations, TCCs, and PCCs to integrate technologies into, and apply innovative concepts to address operational requirements and capability gaps in, its operations in areas such as expeditionary basing and logistics, protection of forces and civilians, information-led operations, situational awareness, planning, training, and medical support.

- *Direct personnel contributions to UN peace operations.* The United States will strongly consider providing military, police, and civilian personnel to support or participate in UN peace operations, if such support would: (1) constitute a capability in which the United States has specialized expertise or capability; (2) have the potential to improve substantially the overall effectiveness of the UN mission, particularly one with significant implications for U.S. national security; and (3) not adversely impact current or projected U.S. operations elsewhere. As determined in PDD–25, the President retains and will not relinquish command of U.S. forces but, as Commander in Chief, has the authority to place U.S. forces under the operational control of a foreign commander when doing so serves U.S. national security interests, as Presidents have done numerous times in U.S. history.

- The United States Government remains committed to protecting our personnel and will continue to seek protections for our military and civilian personnel participating in UN peace operations or other UN-authorized missions. As appropriate, this would include confirming with the host nation that any applicable Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with that nation applies to such U.S. personnel or seeking a SOFA with the host nation, and otherwise seeking other appropriate protections.

- Recognizing the significant impact that participating U.S. uniformed and civilian personnel regularly have on the effectiveness of peace operations, the relevant departments and agencies will proactively identify priority positions in UN field missions, and work with the Department of State to facilitate the placement of U.S. military, civilian, and police personnel in these positions. The United States will also support UN Headquarters with subject matter experts, upon request and as appropriate. The U.S. Mission to the UN will work with the UN to ensure timely and appropriate requests for U.S. personnel, and the Departments of State and Defense will substantially reduce the timeline from a UN request to secondment of any U.S. personnel that the United States Government may decide to make available.

- The United States recognizes the essential role that UN peace operations can and should play in helping conflict-affected countries address key deficits in law enforcement, criminal justice, and corrections systems to support these countries on a path toward sustainable political and economic transitions. To that end, the United States will reinforce its role as a significant PCC, by sending U.S. police officers and criminal justice experts to serve in management, advisory, and training positions in UN field missions. We will also increase our engagement with the UN Secretariat and member states on policing, law enforcement, and criminal justice requirements, to strengthen coordination, policies, and standards for effective management and implementation of policing and the rule of law in peacekeeping operations.

- The Departments of Defense and State will seek to find ways to credit, profes-

sionally reward, and more readily track UN mission experience and expertise of U.S. military and civilian personnel within their respective personnel systems. The Department of Defense will also develop a cadre of military personnel able to serve in leadership roles in UN Headquarters and field missions.

C. Leading and supporting efforts at the UN for systemic reform.

Without major reforms, critical shortcomings in the design, planning, resourcing, execution, and oversight of UN peace operations will severely diminish the effectiveness of any support and assistance along the lines described above. Given the implications for U.S. national security interests and resource commitments, the United States must continue to lead the drive for reform of UN and regional peace operations. The United States will strongly advocate for the following reforms, both with the UN directly and in diplomatic, defense, and military-to-military engagements with member states:

- Development of prioritized and sequenced UN Security Council mandates for UN operations, drawing on best practices and lessons learned across missions, but also tailored to the unique circumstances of each country concerned;
- Rigorous UN Security Council oversight of mission mandate execution complemented by regular, rigorous, critical review of mission performance by the UN Secretariat;
- Strong, capable leadership in field missions and merit-based leadership selection;
- Further professionalization of mission planning and assessment, including more systematic contingency planning for crises, and clearer, conditions-based articulation of the critical path towards mission closure and transition to host government responsibilities;
- Strengthened in-theater rapid response capabilities for missions deployed in high-risk environments, including for medical and casualty evacuation and for force protection;
- A strategic UN force generation system, with an improved standby arrangement process geared towards the most needed capabilities;
- An improved assessments process for troop readiness, including equipment verification;
- Enhanced efforts to improve troop and police performance once deployed in the field;
- Strong mechanisms to ensure greater accountability, particularly in relation to SEA;
- A sustained effort to implement protection of civilian mandates;
- Improved human resources management and procurement practices that enable missions to deploy more quickly, effectively, and flexibly;
- Greater use of inter-mission cooperation to leverage efficiencies and assets across peace operations;
- Options for UN cooperation with and support to regional peace operations over the longer term;
- Greater coordination among UN missions, the UN peacebuilding architecture, and bilateral donors to promote peacebuilding and sustainable capacity building;
- A more rational peace and security bureaucracy at UN Headquarters that efficiently manages and supports the full spectrum of peace operations and is more focused on effectively and expeditiously meeting the requirements of personnel in the field.

D. Implementation.

The Departments of State and Defense and the U.S. Mission to the UN will submit a plan to implement this guidance to the National Security Council staff within three months of the date of this memorandum.

BARACK OBAMA

Remarks at the United Nations Leaders' Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism in New York City
September 29, 2015

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, heads of state and government. Last year, here at the United Nations, I called on the world to unite against the evil that is ISIL, or Daesh, and to eradicate the scourge of violent extremism. And I challenged countries to return to the General Assembly this year with concrete steps that we can take together.

I want to thank everyone who is here today, including my fellow leaders, for answering this call. We are joined by representatives from more than 100 nations, more than 20 multilateral institutions, some 120 civil society groups from around the world, and partners from the private sector. I believe what we have here today is the emergence of a global movement that is united by the mission of degrading and ultimately destroying ISIL.

Together, we're pursuing a comprehensive strategy that is informed by our success over many years in crippling the Al Qaida core in the tribal regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan. And we are harnessing all of our tools: military, intelligence, economic, development, and the strength of our communities.

Now, I have repeatedly said that our approach will take time. This is not an easy task. We have ISIL taking root in areas that already are suffering from failed governance, in some cases; in some cases, civil war or sectarian strife. And as a consequence of the vacuum that exists in many of these areas, ISIL has been able to dig in. They have shown themselves to be resilient, and they are very effective through social media and have been able to attract adherents not just from the areas in which they operate, but in many of our own countries.

There are going to be successes and there are going to be setbacks. This is not a conventional battle. This is a long-term campaign, not only against this particular network, but against its ideology. And so, with the few minutes I have, I want to provide a brief overview of where we stand currently.

Our coalition has grown to some 60 nations, including our Arab partners. Together, we welcome three new countries to our coalition: Nigeria, Tunisia, and Malaysia. Nearly two dozen nations are in some way contributing to the military campaign, and we salute and are grateful for all the servicemembers from our respective nations who are performing with skill and determination.

In Iraq, ISIL continues to hold Mosul, Fallujah, and Ramadi. But Iraqi forces, backed by coalition air power, have liberated towns across Kirkuk province and Tikrit. ISIL has now lost nearly a third of the populated areas in Iraq that it had controlled. Eighteen countries are now helping to train and support Iraqi forces, including Sunni volunteers who want to push ISIL out of their communities. And, Prime Minister Abadi, I want to note the enormous sacrifices being made by Iraqi forces and the Iraqi people in this fight every day.

In Syria, which has obviously been a topic of significant discussion during the course of this General Assembly, we have seen support from Turkey that has allowed us to intensify our air campaign there. ISIL has been pushed back from large sections of northeastern Syria, including the key city of Tal Abyad, putting new pressure on its stronghold of Raqqa. And ISIL has been cut off from almost the entire region bordering Turkey, which is a critical step to-

ward stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters.

Following the special Security Council meeting I chaired last year, more than 20 additional countries have passed or strengthened laws to disrupt the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. We share more information, and we are strengthening border controls. We've prevented would-be fighters from reaching the battlefield and returning to threaten our countries. But this remains a very difficult challenge, and today we're going to focus on how we can do more together. In conjunction with this summit, the United States and our partners are also taking new steps to crack down on the illicit finance that ISIL uses to pay its fighters, fund its operations, and launch attacks.

Our military and intelligence efforts are not going to succeed alone; they have to be matched by political and economic progress to address the conditions that ISIL has exploited in order to take root. Prime Minister Abadi is taking important steps to build a more inclusive and accountable Government, while working to stabilize areas taken back from ISIL. And our nations need to help Prime Minister Abadi in these efforts.

In Syria, as I said yesterday, defeating ISIL requires, I believe, a new leader and an inclusive Government that unites the Syrian people in the fight against terrorist groups. This is going to be a complex process. And as I've said before, we are prepared to work with all countries, including Russia and Iran, to find a political mechanism in which it is possible to begin a transition process.

As ISIL's tentacles reach into other regions, United States is increasing our counterterrorism cooperation with partners like Tunisia. We're boosting our support to Nigeria and its neighbors as they push back against Boko Haram, which has pledged allegiance to ISIL. And we're creating a new clearinghouse to better coordinate the world's support for countries' counterterrorism programs so that our efforts are as effective as possible.

Ultimately, however, it is not going to be enough to defeat ISIL in the battlefield. We have to prevent it from radicalizing, recruiting, and inspiring others to violence in the first place. And this means defeating their ideology. Ideologies are not defeated with guns, they're defeated by better ideas, a more attractive and compelling vision. Building on our White House summit earlier this year and summits around the world since then, we're moving ahead, together, in several areas.

We're stepping up our efforts to discredit ISIL's propaganda, especially online. The UAE's new messaging hub—the Sawab Center—is exposing ISIL for what it is, which is a band of terrorists that kills innocent Muslim men, women, and children. We're working to lift up the voices of Muslim scholars, clerics, and others—including ISIL defectors—who courageously stand up to ISIL and its warped interpretations of Islam.

We recognize that we have to confront the economic grievances that exist in some of the areas that ISIL seeks to exploit. Poverty does not cause terrorism. But as we've seen across the Middle East and North Africa, when people, especially young people, are impoverished and hopeless and feel humiliated by injustice and corruption, that can fuel resentments that terrorists exploit, which is why sustainable development—creating opportunity and dignity, particularly for youth—is part of countering violent extremism.

We recognize we also have to address the political grievances that ISIL exploits. I've said this before: When human rights are denied and citizens have no opportunity to redress their grievances peacefully, it feeds terrorist propaganda that justifies violence. Likewise, when political opponents are treated like terrorists and thrown in jail, it can be a self-fulfilling prophecy. So the real path to lasting stability and progress is not less democracy, I believe it is more democracy, in terms of free speech and freedom of religion, rule of law, strong civil societies. All that has to play a part in countering violent extremism.

And finally, we recognize that our best partners in protecting vulnerable people from succumbing to violent extremist ideologies are the communities themselves: families, friends,

neighbors, clerics, faith leaders who love and care for these young people.

Remember that violent extremism is not unique to any one faith, so no one should be profiled or targeted simply because of their faith. Yet we have to recognize that ISIL is targeting Muslim communities around the world, especially individuals who may be disillusioned or confused or wrestling with their identities.

And in all our countries, we have to continue to build true partnerships with Muslim communities, based on trust and cooperation, so that they can help protect their loved ones from becoming radicalized. And this cannot just be the work of government. It is up to all of us. We have to commit ourselves to build diverse, tolerant, inclusive societies that reject anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant bigotry that creates the divisions, the fear, and the resentments upon which extremists can prey.

I'm pleased that here at this summit, businesses—including high-tech companies—are investing funds, training and technological expertise to support innovative programs that push back on violent extremism. Cities around the world are joining together to build more resilient communities. Researchers are partnering to share best practices, knowing what works and what we can do better.

And as we saw yesterday, young people from around the world are participating in their own summit. And these young people, many of them Muslim, are coming together and using their talents and technology to push back on ISIL's propaganda, especially online, and to protect their brothers and sisters from recruitment. And these young people are an inspiration and give us hope, and I'd ask everyone to join me in thanking all the young people who are here today.

So, to conclude, we face a grave challenge. We have to be clear eyed about the fact that this is very hard work. We have individuals here like Prime Minister Abadi and President Buhari, who are on the front lines. And this is not going to be turned around overnight, because it is not just a military campaign that we are involved in. There are profound changes taking place in the Middle East and North Africa. They're problems that have built over decades that are expressing themselves and manifesting themselves in organizations like ISIL. Even if we were to wipe out the entire cadre of ISIL leadership, we would still have some of these forces at work.

But ultimately, I am optimistic. In Iraq and in Syria, ISIL is surrounded by communities, countries, and a broad international coalition committed to its destruction. We've seen that ISIL can be defeated on the battlefield, where there is sound organization and a government and military that is coordinating with this coalition and with our diplomatic efforts. And here at this summit, we're seeing a new global movement to counter the violent extremism that ISIL needs to survive.

Like terrorists and tyrants throughout history, ISIL will eventually lose because it has nothing to offer but suffering and death. And when you look at the reports of those who are laboring under their control, it is a stark and brutal life that does not appeal to people over the long term. So we will ultimately prevail because we are guided by a stronger, better vision: a commitment to the security, opportunity, and dignity of every human being. But it will require diligence, focus, and sustained effort by all of us. And I am grateful that all of you who are already participating are committed to this work.

With that, I want to give the floor to our Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:53 a.m. in the Trusteeship Council Chamber at United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Statement by the President as Chair of the United Nations Leaders' Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism
September 29, 2015

Leaders from more than 100 countries, 20 multilateral bodies, and 120 civil society and private sector organizations met today in New York City to review progress in countering ISIL, addressing the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), and countering and preventing violent extremism. Participants took note of the efforts of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL since its founding one year ago, expressing support for the work of ministers guiding the Coalition and reaffirming the Coalition's support for the Government of Iraq in its fight against ISIL. They also expressed support for efforts to further implement UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014) on preventing the travel of, and support to, foreign terrorist fighters. Participants welcomed progress on the comprehensive, multi-stakeholder action agenda against violent extremism developed at the February 2015 White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), which catalyzed a global movement to address the drivers of existing terrorist threats and prevent future ones from emerging. Participants underscored the central role that the United Nations should continue to play in addressing these challenges, while ensuring respect for international law. Most importantly, participants announced new initiatives on ISIL, FTFs and CVE, demonstrating the international community's resolve to address these issues.

Countering ISIL

Leaders emphasized their enduring commitment and common mission to degrade and ultimately destroy the terrorist group ISIL. Over the past year this broad and multifaceted campaign has harnessed a range of tools, including superior military strength, to roll back some of the group's gains in Iraq and Syria and build increasingly capable local partner forces. Also critical has been the Coalition's work to organize efforts to disrupt ISIL's finances, counter the group's messaging, and help those who have borne the brunt of ISIL's brutality to return safely home. This is a long-term campaign that will continue to see periods of both progress and challenge as we advance toward our shared objective of degrading and ultimately destroying ISIL in the interests of regional and global security.

Countries leading the Coalition Working Groups on Stabilization Support, Foreign Terrorist Fighters, Counter-ISIL Messaging and Counter-ISIL Finance thanked members for their intensive efforts over the past year, and welcomed new Coalition members Malaysia, Nigeria, and Tunisia. Others contrasted the military situation a year ago—when ISIL was rapidly advancing and threatening Baghdad and Erbil—to the still challenging but improved situation today. While much remains to be done in this multi-year campaign, the Coalition has begun to make progress against ISIL.

Many speakers noted the dedication and sacrifices of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), including Kurdish Peshmerga and tribal forces, and the Syrian moderate opposition and Kurdish forces. In coordination with international partners, these forces defeated ISIL in Kobane in January, in Tikrit in March, in Tal Abyad in June, and in Hasakah in August. All told, ISIL has lost the freedom of movement in approximately 20–25 percent of the populated territory in Iraq and Syria that it held one year ago.

Participants commended the more than 5,000 personnel from 18 countries now in Iraq supporting the Iraqi government's efforts to strengthen and develop local security forces. Coalition members have trained more than 13,000 ISF and Kurdish Peshmerga forces in Iraq; in addition, the U.S.-led advise and assist mission at Taqaddum Airbase (al-Habbaniyah) has facilitated training for thousands of Sunni tribal recruits in Anbar under the auspices of the Iraqi government. The Iraqi government has also taken important steps to equip these fighters. Separately, Coalition personnel are

supporting the Syrian train and equip mission. More than two dozen Coalition partners, led by the United States, have contributed in some way to the military campaign, with more than 7,200 strikes in Iraq and Syria to date. Turkey's opening of its bases to the Coalition and committing its own aircraft have improved Coalition operations.

Steps are also being taken to stabilize liberated areas of Iraq so displaced residents can return to their homes. Participants welcomed the Iraqi government's partnership with local leaders and the United Nations to help stabilize areas liberated from ISIL, and the Coalition is committed to working within this framework to help Iraq ensure that returnees have services to meet basic needs in a safe environment. Quick, targeted infusion of stabilization support in Tikrit has contributed to the return of more than 100,000 civilians, supported by the United Nations Development Program's Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization. More than half subscribed already and the Fund is on track to meet its target of $60–70m by the first quarter of 2016.

Italy is leading the police training aspect of stabilization efforts: more than 100 Carabinieri are working to train Iraqi police, and Coalition members are working to provide trainers, equipment and funding to expand this effort. And Canada is leading Coalition efforts to improve the integration of women and gender perspectives into decision-making, including on stabilization and protection.

Members of the Coalition's Counter-ISIL Finance Group (CIFG) highlighted efforts to disrupt ISIL's financial activities, including its ability to raise, move, and use funds. Earlier this year, the CIFG agreed to implement an action plan to disrupt ISIL's financial activities and as a result, are developing enhanced mechanisms to share information and develop tailored countermeasures to address the problem. Today, the UN added key ISIL facilitators to the al-Qaida Sanctions List—an action that underscores the international community's unity and commitment to disrupting ISIL's financial activities. The further development of an informal Public-Private Partnership to help protect antiquities in Syria and Iraq was also announced.

Participants highlighted efforts to coordinate strategic communications to de-legitimize ISIL and diminish its influence. The new Sawab Center in the UAE is a first step toward creating a series of networks to facilitate rapid communications and empower web-savvy practitioners in effectively conveying their individual messages. Participants also noted how the private sector is working with Coalition governments and took note of a new testimonial campaign focused on individuals who have defected from ISIL.

Many speakers drew attention to the plight of refugees and displaced persons who are victims of the conflict in Syria and Iraq, and to the pressing unmet humanitarian situation. A number of speakers announced new contributions to the UN humanitarian appeals for Syria and Iraq as well as other mechanisms to help relieve the situation.

Countering the Foreign Terrorist Fighter Threat

Coalition members outlined efforts to help counter the FTF threat, to include strengthening counterterrorism legislation in their own countries and expanding information sharing on terrorist identities. The FTF Working Group has established strong coordination with other international fora, including the Global Counterterrorism Forum.

Participants underscored the importance of implementing UN Security Council Resolution 2178, which created a policy and legal framework to address the FTF threat. Participants welcomed progress made since the adoption of the resolution last September, including legislative and judicial efforts. They noted that since the passage of UNSCR 2178, 22 countries have passed or updated existing laws to deal with FTFs; 34 countries have arrested FTFs or aspirants; at least 22 countries have brought cases against FTFs; and 12 countries have prosecuted at least one FTF case, resulting in a conviction or sentencing.

Participants reaffirmed their commitment to increase and enhance border security to identify, restrict and report travel of suspected FTFs

by sharing passenger name records and advanced passenger information and taking greater advantage of INTERPOL's resources, such as screening passengers against its Foreign Terrorist Fighters database and its Stolen and Lost Travel Documents system. In this regard, participants welcomed INTERPOL's announcement of an action agenda that will seek to improve data sharing agreements and international cooperation.

Participants reaffirmed the importance of bilateral agreements to share information on known and suspected FTFs for use by law enforcement, border authorities and security services.

Participants welcomed the efforts of UN bodies, including the Counter-Terrorism Committee, the 1267/1989 Al-Qa'ida Sanctions Committee, and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force to strengthen global actions against FTFs.

Participants reaffirmed the importance of international cooperation and welcomed recent efforts at the international, regional and subregional levels on FTFs, including the Government of Spain's Ministerial Meeting on Stemming the Flow of FTFs in Madrid on July 28. They reaffirmed the importance of initiatives to develop good practices such as the Global Counterterrorism Forum's *Good Practices for a More Effective Response to the Foreign Terrorist Fighter Phenomenon*. Participants also noted the announcement of the GCTF Cross-Working Group Initiative to Address the Full Life-Cycle of Radicalization to Violence, which will reinforce many of the key elements of Coalition efforts and the CVE Summit Action Agenda that emerged from February's White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism and was adopted in Rome.

Participants reaffirmed their resolve to continue to take further concrete steps to address and mitigate the FTF threat, to include strengthening counterterrorism legislation, enhancing border security, improving information sharing and adopting new programs to prevent radicalization to violence. They also urged States, if they are able, to assist in the delivery of urgent capacity building and other technical assistance needed by the most affected States, and to adopt holistic approaches to responding to emerging trends and challenges, including the rehabilitation and reintegration of former foreign terrorist fighters.

Countering and Preventing the Spread of Violent Extremism

Participants underscored that the February 2015 White House Summit to Counter Violent Extremism catalyzed a global movement to embrace a proactive, positive approach to the urgent challenge of violent extremism in all of its forms and manifestations, that involves contributions from national and local governments, civil society, local communities, the private sector, and multilateral bodies.

They highlighted how this approach must complement rule of law-based, rights-respecting, military, intelligence, and law enforcement efforts. They stressed the importance of continuing to expand the set of CVE stakeholders, initiatives, and interventions that are necessary both for confronting ISIL and other existing terrorist threats, as well as preventing future threats from emerging.

Participants expressed gratitude to the governments and organizations that hosted regional CVE summits and other related events following February's CVE Summit, which were essential for expanding participation in and sustaining the global movement against violent extremism.

Participants welcomed the progress made on the implementation of the CVE Summit's Action Agenda, including new CVE strategies, policies, programs, and partnerships being developed across the Agenda's several pillars, and pledged to redouble implementation efforts. Progress has included:

- new, inclusive national CVE strategies and programs that place increasing emphasis on the role of local communities;
- new initiatives involving women, youth, scholars, and clerics discrediting—both on-line and off-line—hateful ideologies

and build community resilience against violent extremism;

- business leaders investing in community-based solutions;
- mayors and municipal leaders developing engagement programs that lift up and support ethnic and religious minority communities;
- additional funding and other support for practical multilateral CVE efforts, including those of the UN, the Global Counterterrorism Forum, Hedayah, and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund; and
- the United Nations and other multilateral bodies intensifying their own CVE efforts, including by developing action plans, programs, and initiatives that will help sustain the global CVE movement.

Participants welcomed the update from the UN Secretary-General on the development of his plan of action to prevent violent extremism, which he will present to the UNGA in November. They encouraged the UN to play a central role in sustaining the CVE Summit Action Agenda in 2016 and beyond.

Participants reaffirmed their commitment to championing the global CVE movement following the Leaders' Summit, underscoring the need for government and non-government actors to collaborate to make progress on several priority issues, including:

- better understanding the drivers of violent extremism at the local and regional level;
- countering the narratives of violent extremists who glorify violence and attempt to recruit and radicalize young men and women;
- strengthening protections for members of all communities, in particular ethnic and religious minorities;
- preventing radicalization in prisons and facilitating the rehabilitation and reintegration of former violent extremism, including by expanding diversion programs;
- addressing political, social and economic grievances that terrorists exploit, including by working together to advance human rights, improving the rule of law, expanding social services and strengthening security in communities that are at risk; and
- ensuring the inclusion of local communities, civil society, religious leaders, and the private sector in addressing the underlying drivers of violent extremism, recognizing that they are often more capable and credible than national governments.

Participants pledged to make progress on these priority issues, including by supporting the new sub-national networks announced during the Summit, such as those involving cities (i.e., the Strong Cities Network), civil society, and researchers (RESOLVE), new regional CVE hubs and hubs, initiatives aimed at strengthening CVE capacities and cooperation across East Africa and the Western Balkans, as well as supporting the youth-driven Action Agenda that emerged from the first-ever Global Youth Summit Against Violent Extremism.

NOTE: The statement referred to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations; and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

Remarks at a Meeting With State Legislators
September 30, 2015

Thank you so much. Everybody, have a seat. Well, welcome to the White House. I invited all of you here because if there's one thing I've learned, it's that you've got to be nice to State

legislators. [*Laughter*] You never know when one of them might end up being President. And—[*laughter*]—so you want to treat them with respect.

It is great to see all of you. I hope that Jerry has been treating you and our team have been treating you reasonably well. The—I am partial to State legislatures, particularly, by the way, senators. I'm sorry, House members. But I'm just—[*laughter*]. I'm just saying, we tend to be a little more sensible, in the—at least at the State levels—I don't know about the Federal. [*Laughter*]

But I see my friend Jim from Illinois back here—Jim Clayborne. And he and I served together, and he is still doing a great job. My first campaign for the State Senate was nearly 20 years ago. I had to print my own flyers at Kinko's. [*Laughter*] Hardly anybody could pronounce my name. We had to go door to door—Michelle and me and a handful of volunteers—just to get enough petitions to get on the ballot. And just about everybody who I talked to—when I—when they did bother talking to me, because there were a number of times where people didn't answer the door or figured I was selling something or preaching something. If they did answer the door and heard me speak for a while, they'd say, well, you seem like a nice young man, why would you want to go into something dirty and nasty like politics? [*Laughter*] And I'm sure some of you have heard that not just from strangers, but from your family members.

But what drove me to run for office, what I'm sure drove many of you, is the conviction that politics can in fact be a noble profession; that you can in fact help to shape and create more opportunity in communities and districts and States and in our Nation. And the more time I spent in my community, the more convinced I was that although change happens from the bottom up—and it is critical for communities to embrace nongovernmental organizations and community organizations and philanthropies and faith communities in trying to make sure that our schools are working and that our streets are safe and that people have jobs and opportunity—ultimately, we also need to have a government that is an effective partner, that is not there just to try to stay in power or score cheap political points or get on the nightly news, but elected representatives that are genuinely trying to move the ball forward and try to bring our country together rather than divide it.

And that ideal—the belief that people who love this country can change it—is why I ran for this office 8 years ago. The financial crisis hadn't happened yet, and it turned out that that would make our job a lot harder. But when you look back on these last 7 years, we've made enormous progress.

Now, let's face it. You're not going to hear that progress acknowledged from the folks on the other side who are running for this office at the moment, and I understand that. That's the nature of politics. But somehow, they've invented a reality that everything was terrific back in 2007, 2008, when the unemployment rate and the uninsured rate were skyrocketing, and when our economy was shedding hundreds of thousands of jobs every month, and we were mired in two wars and hopelessly addicted to foreign oil, and bin Laden was still plotting. Apparently, those were the good old days before I came in and messed things up. [*Laughter*]

But there is this pesky thing called facts. And here are the facts. When I took office, the unemployment rate was on its way to 10 percent. Today, it is at 5.1 percent. When I took office, we were losing up to 800,000 jobs a month. Today, our businesses have created jobs for a record 66 months in a row—more than 3 million [13 million]* overall. There are more job openings right now in fact, than any time in our history.

When I took office, more than 15,000 Americans [15 percent of Americans]* were uninsured. Today, only 9.2 percent are uninsured. And if we can get a few more States to expand Medicaid then even fewer will be uninsured.

So, for the first time in—on record, more than 90 percent of Americans have health insurance. And for the first time, insurance

* White House correction.

companies can't discriminate against you because of a preexisting condition, which is helping all of us. And by the way, despite the predictions, we've done all this and cut the deficit by two-thirds since I took office.

When I took office, we were hopelessly addicted to foreign oil. Today, we've cut our oil imports by more than half. We've tripled the power that we generate from wind, generate 20 times more solar energy than we did when I came into office. And that has proven to be a steady source of good jobs that can't be outsourced.

Our reading scores are up. Our high school graduation rates are up. Our college attendance is up. There are almost no economic indicators that don't show we have made enormous progress during the course of these last 7 years, and we've done it in partnership with so many of you and so many State governments around the country.

I'm going to hold up my record up against anybody. Our policy prescriptions have been the right ones. We are on the right side of these debates that are taking place right now. And those things that are not yet done, aren't done because we've got folks on the other side that are intent on saying no, even when they know it's the right thing to do, even when it's—originally was their idea.

On issue after issue, the American people agree. The majority of Americans agree we should raise the minimum wage. A majority of Americans agree we should institute paid family leave and sick days for our workers. One recent poll, run by a Republican pollster, showed that a majority of Republican voters think that climate change is caused by human activity and that their elected officials should do something about it. The only thing that makes climate change political is that not one—not a single one—of the top 10 candidates for President on the other side agree with these Republican voters, unique among conservative parties worldwide.

The point is, Americans are not actually as divided as our politics or sometimes our media would suggest on particular issues. We sort ourselves out partly because we're watching different things and reading different things. But when you actually ask people their opinions on issues, there is a convergence there. There's a path for us to act in a unified way. But it requires elected officials to be serious about getting the job done, as opposed to winning the next election. And we are ready to build on that progress. We're ready to build on what works. And our policies are the ones that work.

So part of our task is to make sure that both sides of the aisle at every level of government get the message that people are looking for us to actually do what makes sense and what the evidence and facts show are going to help working families. And the good news is that it looks like the Republicans will just barely avoid shutting down the Government for the second time in 2 years. That's a somewhat low bar, but we should celebrate where we can. [*Laughter*] The bad news is that it looks like Republicans will just barely avoid shutting down the government again for the second time in 2 years. Instead of manufacturing new crises, Congress should be investing in the things that help our economy grow.

Now, given that, at least for the next year, year and a half, there's not going to be the kind of action on a wide range of issues that we'd like to see coming out of Capitol Hill, that puts more of a burden—but also a greater opportunity—on State legislatures all across the country. Because you can act when Washington won't.

The Republican-led Congress hasn't raised America's minimum wage, but 17 States did it on their own, and that boosted wages for 7 million workers. So you are to be congratulated for that. That's your work. Congress hasn't answered my call to provide our workers with paid sick days and paid family leave, but four States have now taken action on their own, including Oregon this year. So congratulations, Oregon. We're proud of you. Congress has not yet taken up my plan to bring down the cost of community college to zero for responsible students, but this year, two of your States took action to make sure that every hard-working

young person can afford the new skills that they need to get a good job.

So, over the last few years, States likes yours have gotten a lot done. And I hope you're going to head back home ready to get even more done, whether it's some of the issues I already mentioned or expanding pre-K or modernizing licensing laws to help workers and our veterans fill those jobs or putting into place the—some limits on the amount of carbon pollution that power plants can generate and dump into our air. We've got to keep moving forward. And we've got to keep measuring success not just by winning elections—although I do want us to do a little more work and pay a little more attention to State and legislative elections and gubernatorial elections and not just focused on national politics, because that's where a lot of decisions get made—but I want us most importantly, to be focusing on how we're helping people in their own lives every single day.

At its worst, politics can be a dirty business. It can be a tool for those with wealth and power to rig the system so that they can keep that wealth and power. It can be a place where elected officials shy away from tough issues because they're not interested in stirring up controversy that might cost them an election. But that makes it all the more important that we've got folks like you who believe in practicing politics at its best.

So when you talk to principled, passionate people who want to run for office for the right reasons, but wonder if it's really worth it, you can tell them that the President of the United States says absolutely. It is absolutely worth it. We haven't won every fight. We've got a lot more work to do. But all across America, there are people who have jobs today that didn't have them because of the work that we did. There are people who have health insurance today who didn't have it before because of the work that we did. There are students who are going to college for the first time because we've made that possible. There are veterans who served tour after tour who are now home with their families and are getting help that they have not only earned, but that will help make our country stronger.

So that's what change looks like. And that's why the right policies are important. And that's what public service is about. So I want to thank all of you for the outstanding work that you are doing to keep your communities, your States on the right track. When you get frustrated, don't lose heart, because we're counting on you and, more importantly, the families in your districts and in your States are counting on you. And I think their faith is well placed.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:18 p.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Jerry E. Abramson, Director, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Message to the Congress on Terminating the Designations of Seychelles, Uruguay, and Venezuela as Beneficiary Developing Countries Under the Generalized System of Preferences Program
September 30, 2015

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 502(f)(2) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the "1974 Act") (19 U.S.C. 2462(f)(2)), I am providing notification of my intent to terminate the designations of Seychelles, Uruguay, and Venezuela as beneficiary developing countries under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program. Section 502(e) of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2462(e)) provides that if the President determines that a beneficiary developing country has become a "high income" country, as defined by the official statistics of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development of the World Bank (the "World Bank"), the President shall terminate the designation of such country as a beneficiary developing

country for purposes of the GSP program, effective on January 1 of the second year following the year in which such determination is made.

Pursuant to section 502(e) of the 1974 Act, I have determined that it is appropriate to terminate the designations of Seychelles, Uruguay, and Venezuela as beneficiary developing countries under the GSP program, because they have become high income countries as defined by the World Bank. Accordingly, their eligibility for trade benefits under the GSP program will end on January 1, 2017.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
September 30, 2015.

NOTE: The related proclamation is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Congress on Terminating the Designation of Seychelles as a Beneficiary Sub-Saharan African Country Under the African Growth and Opportunity Act

September 30, 2015

To the Congress of the United States:

I am providing notification of my intent to terminate the designation of Seychelles as a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) program.

Section 506A(a)(1) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the "1974 Act") (19 U.S.C. 2466a(a)(1)) authorizes the President to designate a country listed in section 107 of the AGOA (19 U.S.C. 3706) as a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country eligible for the benefits described in section 506A(b) of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2466a(b)), if the President determines that the country meets the eligibility requirements in section 104 of the AGOA (19 U.S.C. 3703), subject to the authority granted to the President under subsections (a), (d), and (e) of section 502 of the 1974 Act.

Pursuant to section 502(e) of the 1974 Act, I have determined that Seychelles has become a "high income" country and its designation as a beneficiary sub-Saharan country is no longer within the authority granted to the President under section 502 of the 1974 Act. Accordingly, pursuant to section 506A(a)(1) of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2466a(a)(1)), I have determined that Seychelles is no longer eligible for benefits as a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country for the purpose of section 506A of the 1974 Act, effective January 1, 2017.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
September 30, 2015.

NOTE: The related proclamation is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Congress Designating Funds for Overseas Contingency Operations and Global Counterterrorism

September 30, 2015

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 114(c) of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016, also titled the TSA Office of Inspection Accountability Act of 2015 (the "Act"), I hereby designate for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism all funding (including the rescission of funds) and contributions from foreign governments so designated by the Congress in

the Act pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, as outlined in the enclosed list of accounts.

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed memorandum from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
September 30, 2015.

Message to the Congress on Designation of Emergency Funding Under the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as Amended
September 30, 2015

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 135 of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016, also titled the TSA Office of Inspection Accountability Act of 2015 (the "Act"), I hereby designate as an emergency requirement all funding so designated by the Congress in the Act pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, for the following account: "Department of Agriculture—Forest Service—Wildland Fire Management."

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed memorandum from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
September 30, 2015.

Remarks on the Shooting in Roseburg, Oregon
October 1, 2015

There's been another mass shooting in America, this time in a community college in Oregon. That means there are more American families—moms, dads, children—whose lives have been changed forever. That means there's another community stunned with grief and communities across the country forced to relieve their own anguish and parents across the country who are scared because they know it might have been their families or their children.

I've been to Roseburg, Oregon. There are really good people there. I want to thank all the first responders whose bravery likely saved some lives today. Federal law enforcement has been on the scene in a supporting role, and we've offered to stay and help as much as Roseburg needs, for as long as they need.

In the coming days, we'll learn about the victims, young men and women who were studying and learning and working hard, their eyes set on the future, their dreams on what they could make of their lives. And America will wrap everyone who's grieving with our prayers and our love.

But as I said just a few months ago, and I said a few months before that, and I said each time we see one of these mass shootings, our thoughts and prayers are not enough. It's not enough. It does not capture the heartache and grief and anger that we should feel. And it does nothing to prevent this carnage from being inflicted someplace else in America, next week or a couple of months from now.

We don't yet know why this individual did what he did. And it's fair to say that anybody who does this has a sickness in their minds, regardless of what they think their motivations may be. But we are not the only country on Earth that has people with mental illnesses or want to do harm to other people. We are the

only advanced country on Earth that sees these kinds of mass shootings every few months.

Earlier this year, I answered a question in an interview by saying, "The United States of America is the one advanced nation on Earth in which we do not have sufficient commonsense gun safety laws, even in the face of repeated mass killings." And later that day, there was a mass shooting at a movie theater in Lafayette, Louisiana. That day! Somehow, this has become routine. The reporting is routine. My response here at this podium ends up being routine. The conversation in the aftermath of it. We've become numb to this.

We talked about this after Columbine and Blacksburg, after Tucson, after Newtown, after Aurora, after Charleston. It cannot be this easy for somebody who wants to inflict harm on other people to get his or her hands on a gun.

And what's become routine, of course, is the response of those who oppose any kind of commonsense gun legislation. Right now I can imagine the press releases being cranked out. We need more guns, they'll argue. Fewer gun safety laws.

Does anybody really believe that? There are scores of responsible gun owners in this country. They know that's not true. We know because of the polling that says the majority of Americans understand we should be changing these laws, including the majority of responsible, law-abiding gun owners.

There is a gun for roughly every man, woman, and child in America. So how can you, with a straight face, make the argument that more guns will make us safer? We know that States with the most gun laws tend to have the fewest gun deaths. So the notion that gun laws don't work or just will make it harder for law-abiding citizens and criminals will still get their guns, it's not borne out by the evidence.

We know that other countries, in response to one mass shooting, have been able to craft laws that almost eliminate mass shootings: friends of ours, allies of ours; Great Britain, Australia; countries like ours. So we know there are ways to prevent it.

And of course, what's also routine is that somebody, somewhere will comment and say, Obama politicized this issue. Well, this is something we should politicize. It is relevant to our common life together, to the body politic. I would ask news organizations—because I won't put these facts forward—have news organizations tally up the number of Americans who've been killed through terrorist attacks over the last decade and the number of Americans who've been killed by gun violence, and post those side by side on your news reports. This won't be information coming from me; it will be coming from you. We spend over a trillion dollars and pass countless laws and devote entire agencies to preventing terrorist attacks on our soil and rightfully so. And yet we have a Congress that explicitly blocks us from even collecting data on how we could potentially reduce gun deaths. How can that be?

This is a political choice that we make to allow this to happen every few months in America. We collectively are answerable to those families who lose their loved ones because of our inaction. When Americans are killed in mine disasters, we work to make mines safer. When Americans are killed in floods and hurricanes, we make communities safer. When roads are unsafe, we fix them to reduce auto fatalities. We have seatbelt laws because we know it saves lives. So the notion that gun violence is somehow different, that our freedom and our Constitution prohibits any modest regulation of how we use a deadly weapon, when there are law-abiding gun owners all across the country who could hunt and protect their families and do everything they do under such regulations, doesn't make sense.

So tonight, as those of us who are lucky enough to hug our kids a little closer are thinking about the families who aren't so fortunate, I'd ask the American people to think about how they can get our Government to change these laws and to save lives and to let young people grow up. And that will require a change of politics on this issue. And it will require that the American people, individually, whether you are a Democrat or a Republican or an Independent, when you decide to vote for somebody, are making a determination as to whether this cause of continuing death for innocent

people should be a relevant factor in your decision. If you think this is a problem, then you should expect your elected officials to reflect your views.

And I would particularly ask America's gun owners—who are using those guns properly, safely, to hunt, for sport, for protecting their families—to think about whether your views are properly being represented by the organization that suggests it's speaking for you.

And each time this happens, I'm going to bring this up. Each time this happens, I am going to say that we can actually do something about it, but we're going to have to change our laws. And this is not something I can do by myself. I've got to have a Congress, and I've got to have State legislatures and Governors who are willing to work with me on this.

I hope and pray that I don't have to come out again during my tenure as President to offer my condolences to families in these circumstances. But based on my experience as President, I can't guarantee that. And that's terrible to say. And it can change.

May God bless the memories of those who were killed today. May He bring comfort to their families and courage to the injured as they fight their way back. And may He give us the strength to come together and find the courage to change.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:22 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Christopher Harper-Mercer, suspected gunman in the shooting at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, OR. The related proclamation of October 2 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on the Resignation of Arne Duncan as Secretary of Education and the Designation of Acting Deputy Secretary of Education John B. King, Jr., as Acting Secretary of Education

October 2, 2015

The President. Please be seated, everybody. Good afternoon.

Arne Duncan is one of my longest serving Cabinet Secretaries, and he's been a friend for a lot longer than that. So it's with some regret and sorrow that I've accepted his decision to return to our hometown of Chicago. After more than 6 years of living in Washington, Arne's wonderful wife Karen and their excellent kids Claire and Ryan—who are also buddies of mine—wanted to move back home. And that's meant in the interim a lot of time apart.

So I'll be honest: I pushed Arne to stay. Sorry, guys. But I also know from personal experience how hard it is to be away from your family on a sustained basis. So, while I will miss Arne deeply, he's more than earned the right to return home.

Take a look at what Arne has accomplished over the last 6½ years. He's one of the longest serving Secretaries of Education in our history and one of the more consequential. In just a few years, Arne and his team have delivered some incredible results at every stage of the educational experience. More than 30 States have upped their investment in early childhood education. Nearly every State in America has raised standards for teaching and learning and expectations for what our kids can learn, and our high school graduation rate is at an alltime high. We've helped millions more families afford college, and more Americans are graduating from college than ever before. And that's just scratching the surface.

Arne has done more to bring our educational system—sometimes kicking and screaming—into the 21st century than anybody else. America is going to be better off for what he has done. It's going to be more competitive and more prosperous. It is going to be more equal and more upwardly mobile. It's a record that I truly believe no other Education Secretary can match. Arne bleeds this stuff. He cares

so much about our kids. And he has been so passionate about this work. And everybody who interacts with him, including people who disagree with him on some issues, never questions the genuineness and heart that he has brought to this job.

So I couldn't be prouder of him. And, for good measure, Arne also holds the record for most points scored in an NBA All-Star game. And he is my favorite partner in pickup basketball—[*laughter*]—the smartest player I know, even though he's very slow—[*laughter*]—and has no hops. [*Laughter*] He knows it's true. I will say, watching Ryan, by the way, that the son will soon be surpassing the father because this young man has got game. [*Laughter*]

Now, keep in mind, none of this change has been easy, and we still have a long way to go. One of the things about education is that it doesn't deliver results tomorrow or the next day; this is a decade-long or longer proposition. We plant seeds now, we make changes now, and we watch each successive class benefit from these reforms. And it goes in fits and starts, and we have a decentralized system; that's how our education tradition evolved. So it's not easy, and it's not quick, but we are making progress. And we're not going to stop in these last 15 months.

And that's why it's so important and why I think we're very lucky that, even as Arne steps down, we've got an exceptionally talented educator to step in, and that is Dr. John King.

John is already on Arne's leadership team. He's been an educator all his life: a teacher, a principal, a leader of schools, the New York State's education chief. He's the right man to lead the department. He shares our commitment to preparing every child for success in a more innovative and competitive world. He's got a great team already at the Department of Education of which I am very, very proud. His family is equally cool and good looking. [*Laughter*] And he has equally exceptional children. And I know that, together, we're going to continue to be able to do great things on behalf of our kids.

So, Arne and John, I want to wish both of you a hearty congratulations and good luck.

Now I'm going to let them say a few words, and then, I'm just going to make a few remarks before I take some questions from the press.

Start with Arne.

Secretary Duncan. I've cried more today than I have in a while, so I'll try not to get up here and cry.

I'll start with the President. And when he asked us to come to DC and work with him, that was about a 1-minute conversation with my wife. And it wasn't that we wanted to leave Chicago, it wasn't that I necessarily wanted to be the Education Secretary, I just wanted to be on his team and believed so much in what he was about and what he stood for.

And I have to say, 7½ years later, my admiration is only greater. And it's pretty remarkable—it's important for the folks to know—that every hard decision, his only question was, what's the right thing to do for kids and challenging us and our team to fight for kids every single day. And often, that was a hard political decision, and that was never a factor. And his passion and his commitment has been absolutely extraordinary. And for me, it's not the political leadership, it's not the educational leadership, it's the moral leadership.

And I just can't tell you, Mr. President, personally, what an unbelievable honor it was just to spend some time.

And for those—it's every day you see—for folks who watched him last night talking about the horrendous massacre, gun massacre, in Oregon and how preventable these things are, we need that moral leadership. And please keep that fight.

To our team, the team you have at the White House—Cecilia and Denis and Valerie and others—it's been extraordinary to work with the DPC. I don't say this lightly: I think our team at the Department of Education is stronger than it's ever been. You never know over 7, 8 years, how those teams go, and do you have the B team towards the end. Well, I think we have the A team and a combination of being able to work with the White House—Shaun and Sylvia and so many folks are here—Anthony. We have the team in place. I'm just

extraordinarily hopeful and confident about what they can do together.

Emma and Ted and the rest of the crew—you said a little bit about John—and the folks who know, for all of us, this work is very, very personal. For the President, it's very personal. For me it's very personal. John was one of those kids that probably shouldn't be in a room like this, if you sort of look at the stereotypes. And not the easiest time growing up—he'll tell you more about it—but lost both his parents at a pretty early age, went to live with his brother. That wasn't very easy either. But he had an amazing teacher who saw something in him, who kept him going. And today he gets to stand here by the—with the President.

And so many times, I think we, in society, write off kids that look like John and come from places like John. And to see what he can accomplish—I think that's what drives all of us. We know there are so many other kids out there we can reach.

And while I'm deeply, deeply sad to be leaving, I'm extraordinarily happy and thankful and proud that John is going to carry on this work with the team. So I want to thank everybody for their hard work.

I quickly want to—try not to get emotional here—but thank my parents as well. And my dad was a lifelong educator at the University of Chicago, taught throughout his life. My mother started an inner-city tutoring program before we were born and raised all of us as a part of that program. And that changed our lives. And all our life, we saw what kids could do when they were given a chance. And that's why we do this work today. And to be able to see what she did at one little corner at 46th and Greenwood and to now have a chance over the past 6½ years to try and have an impact around the Nation, because this man gave us a chance—for my family, I can't tell you how much it means to us.

And then, finally, just to my family. And I love this work. I love this team. I love the President. I love the chance to serve. The only thing I love more is you guys. And I can't wait to come home and see a couple more track meets and maybe get to coach Ryan a little bit and maybe have a few more dinners and maybe go to a movie someday; that would be pretty amazing. So—[*laughter*].

The President. Wow! All right!

Secretary Duncan. It's been too long. And so it's been an amazing, amazing journey, and I feel so proud to be so lucky to have been a part of this team. And, Mr. President, thanks for creating the climate in which all of us here—all of us here—could have the impact we did. And we can never repay the debt of gratitude we all owe you for your leadership and your courage. So thank you so much.

And I want to turn it over to John.

Acting Secretary–designate King. Thank you, Arne, for very kind words. Thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to serve and for the faith that your—you've placed in me and the team that we have at the Department.

I'm deeply honored by the chance to serve and also deeply humbled by following in Arne's footsteps. Arne is an extraordinary leader who I have watched demonstrate tremendous courage in fighting for kids and fighting for what's best for kids, but also his being willing to listen: to listen to folks and to make adjustments and to make sure that everything we do every day is towards the goal of greater equity.

Mr. President, you and Arne and our team at the Department have laid out an ambitious agenda: from strengthening early childhood education and expanding access to early childhood, to raising standards for teaching and learning in K through 12, to ensuring that more Americans have access to high-quality higher education, to ensuring that we support our teachers and that we invest in our teachers and provide the best preparation and support and leadership opportunities for them. It's an incredible agenda, and I'm proud to be able to carry it forward with the amazing team that we have at the Department.

Earlier this week, Arne gave a speech at the National Press Club, and in that speech, Arne said education can be the difference between life and death. And I know that's true because it was for me. I grew up in Brooklyn. I lost my mom when I was 8, my dad when I was 12. My dad was very sick before he passed. I moved

around between family members and schools. But teachers, New York City public school teachers, are the reason that I am alive. They are the reason that I became a teacher. They are the reason I am standing here today. Those teachers created amazing educational experiences, but also gave me hope: hope about what is possible, what could be possible for me in life.

I know schools can't do it alone. There's work we have to do on economic development and housing and health care. But I know that my parents—who spent their lives as New York City public school educators—believed that school was at the heart of our promise of equality of opportunity for all Americans. That's what they believed. That's what the President believes. That's what Arne believes. And that's what I feel very privileged to be able to work on with this amazing team we have at the Department.

Every child in the United States, every college student, every disconnected youth, every working parent who just wants a few more credits in order to improve their salary and position at their job—everyone deserves the kind of opportunity that I had to have a great education. Every child deserves the kind of opportunity that my beautiful daughters Amina and Mireya have to have a great education, the kind of education their grandparents worked to provide.

I'm so grateful to my very supportive wife Melissa, so grateful to the Secretary for the opportunity he gave me to join his team, and incredibly grateful to the President for the opportunity to work with a wonderful group of people at the Education Department to try to expand opportunity.

Thank you.

The President. Thank you. Good luck. Thank you.

All right. Two good men, doing really important work. So I'm lucky to have them, both as colleagues and as friends, and I'm looking forward to seeing even more work done in the next few months.

We've got some other business to attend to. So all of you who are here to celebrate Arne and John, you're lucky enough now to have to sit through—[*laughter*]—a little bit of a press conference with me. So make yourselves comfortable. [*Laughter*] I warned the kids ahead of time. I said, try not to look completely bored. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:38 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, Secretary Duncan referred to Cecilia Muñoz, Director, Domestic Policy Council; White House Chief of Staff Denis R. McDonough; White House Senior Adviser Valerie B. Jarrett; Shaun L.S. Donovan, Director, Office of Management and Budget; Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Mathews Burwell; Secretary of Transportation Anthony R. Foxx; Emma Vadehra, Chief of Staff, Department of Education; and Under Secretary of Education Theodore R. Mitchell. He also referred to his mother Susan Duncan.

The President's News Conference
October 2, 2015

The President. I'm going to take a couple of questions from the press. But first, a few additional pieces of business.

First of all, we learned today that our businesses created another 118,000 new jobs in September, which means that we now have had 67 straight months of job creation, 13.2 million new jobs in all, and an unemployment rate that has fallen from a high of 10 percent down to 5.1 percent. These long-term trends are obviously good news, particularly for every American waking up each morning and heading off to a new job.

But we would be doing even better if we didn't have to keep on dealing with unnecessary crises in Congress every few months. And this is especially important right now, because although the American economy has been chugging along at a steady pace, much of the global economy is softening. We've seen an im-

pact on our exports, which was a major driver of growth for us particularly at the beginning of the recovery. And so our own growth could slow if Congress does not do away with some of the counterproductive austerity measures that they have put in place and if Congress does not avoid the kind of manufactured crises that shatter consumer confidence and could disrupt an already skittish global economy.

On Wednesday, more than half of Republicans voted to shut down the Government for the second time in 2 years. Now, the good news is that there were enough votes in both parties to pass a last-minute bill to keep the Government open and operating for another 10 weeks before we can get a more long-term solution. But keep in mind, that gimmick only sets up another potential manufactured crisis just 2 weeks before Christmas.

And I've said this before, I want to repeat it: This is not the way the United States should be operating. Oftentimes, I hear from folks up on Capitol Hill, "the need for American leadership," "the need for America to be number one." Well, you know what, around the globe, part of what makes us a leader is when we govern effectively and we keep our own house in order and we pass budgets and we can engage in long-term planning and we can invest in the things that are important for the future. That's U.S. leadership.

When we fail to do that, we diminish U.S. leadership. It's not how we are supposed to operate. And we can't just keep on kicking down the road without solving any problems or doing any long-term planning for the future. That's true for our military; that's true for our domestic programs. The American people, American families deserve better. And we can grow faster and the economy can improve if Congress acts with dispatch. It will get worse if they don't.

That's why I want to be very clear: I will not sign another shortsighted spending bill like the one Congress sent me this week. We purchased ourselves 10 additional weeks; we need to use them effectively.

Keep in mind that a few years ago, both parties put in place harmful automatic cuts that make no distinction between spending we don't need and spending we do. We can revisit the history of how that happened. I have some rather grim memories of it. But the notion was that even as we were bringing down the deficit, we would come up with a sustainable, smart, long-term approach to investing in the things that we need. That didn't happen. And so now these cuts that have been maintained have been keeping our economy from growing faster. It's time to undo them. If we don't, then we will have to fund our economic and national security priorities in 2016 at the same levels that we did in 2006.

Now, understand, during that decade, between 2006 and 2016, our economy has grown by 12 percent. Our population has grown by 8 percent. New threats have emerged; new opportunities have appeared. We can't fund our country the way we did 10 years ago, because we have greater demands: with an aging population, with kids who need schools, with roads that need to be fixed, with a military on which we are placing extraordinary demands.

And we can't cut our way to prosperity. Other countries have tried it, and it has not worked. We've grown faster than they have because we did not pursue these blind, unthinking cuts to necessary investments for our growth. And by the way, because we've grown faster than them, we've brought our deficits down faster than they have.

I want to repeat this because the public apparently never believes it. Since I took office, we've cut our deficits by two-thirds. The deficit has not been going up—[*laughter*]—it has been coming down, precipitously. We've cut our deficits by two-thirds. They're below the average deficits over the past 40 years.

So the bottom line is, Congress has to do its job. It can't flirt with another shutdown. It should pass a serious budget. And if they do, and get rid of some of these mindless cuts, even as we're still prudent about maintaining the spending that we need, but not spending we don't need and is not working, their own nonpartisan budget office estimates we're going to add an extra half-million jobs to our economy next year alone. We can immediately

put half a million more people back to work if we just have a more sensible budget.

And in these negotiations, nobody is going to get everything they want. We have to work together, though, even if we disagree, in order to do the people's business. At some point, we have to want to govern and not just play politics or play to various political bases. At some point, we need to pass bills so that we can rebuild our roads and keep our kids learning and keep our military strong and help people prepare for and recover from disasters. That is Congress's most basic job. That's what our Government is supposed to do: serve the American people.

So, with that, let me take some questions. And I'll start with Julie Pace of AP.

Hang in there, kids. [*Laughter*]

Syria/President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia/Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization

Q. It will be over soon. Thank you, Mr. President. There have been several developments in Syria that I wanted to ask you about, starting with Russia's involvement. You met with President Putin earlier this week, and I wonder if you think he was honest with you about his intentions in Syria. If Russia is targeting groups beyond the Islamic State, including U.S.-aligned groups, does the U.S. military have an obligation to protect them? And in—on the situation in Syria more broadly, there have obviously been failures in the U.S. train-and-equip program. Do you believe that that program can be fixed, or do you have to look at other options? Would you, in particular, be willing to reconsider a no-fly zone, which several Presidential candidates, including your former Secretary of State, are now calling for?

The President. Yes. Well, first and foremost, let's understand what's happening in Syria and how we got here. What started off as peaceful protests against Asad, the President, evolved into a civil war because Asad met those protests with unimaginable brutality. And so this is not a conflict between the United States and any party in Syria; this is a conflict between the Syrian people and a brutal, ruthless dictator.

Point number two is that the reason Asad is still in power is because Russia and Iran have supported him throughout this process. And in that sense, what Russia is doing now is not particularly different from what they had been doing in the past. They're just more overt about it. They have been propping up a regime that is rejected by an overwhelming majority of the Syrian population because they've seen that he has been willing to drop barrel bombs on children and on villages indiscriminately and has been more concerned about clinging to power than the state of his country.

So, in my discussions with President Putin, I was very clear that the only way to solve the problem in Syria is to have a political transition that is inclusive—that keeps the State intact, that keeps the military intact, that maintains cohesion, but that is inclusive—and the only way to accomplish that is for Mr. Asad to transition, because you cannot rehabilitate him in the eyes of Syrians. This is not a judgment I'm making, it is a judgment that the overwhelming majority of Syrians make.

And I said to Mr. Putin that I'd be prepared to work with him if he is willing to broker with his partners, Mr. Asad and Iran, a political transition—we can bring the rest of the world community to a brokered solution—but that a military solution alone, an attempt by Russia and Iran to prop up Asad and try to pacify the population is just going to get them stuck in a quagmire. And it won't work. And they will be there for a while if they don't take a different course.

I also said to him that it is true that the United States and Russia and the entire world have a common interest in destroying ISIL. But what was very clear—and regardless of what Mr. Putin said—was that he doesn't distinguish between ISIL and a moderate Sunni opposition that wants to see Mr. Asad go. From their perspective, they're all terrorists. And that's a recipe for disaster, and it's one that I reject.

So where we are now is that we are having technical conversations about deconfliction so

that we're not seeing U.S. and American [Russian]* firefights in the air. But beyond that, we're very clear in sticking to our belief and our policy that the problem here is Asad and the brutality that he has inflicted on the Syrian people and that it has to stop. And in order for it to stop, we're prepared to work with all the parties concerned. But we are not going to cooperate with a Russian campaign to simply try to destroy anybody who is disgusted and fed up with Mr. Asad's behavior.

Keep in mind also, from a practical perspective, the moderate opposition in Syria is one that if we're ever going to have to have a political transition, we need. And the Russian policy is driving those folks underground or creating a situation in which they are debilitated—decapacitated, and it's only strengthening ISIL. And that's not good for anybody.

In terms of our support of opposition groups inside of Syria, I made very clear early on that the United States couldn't impose a military solution on Syria either, but that it was in our interest to make sure that we were engaged with moderate opposition inside of Syria, because eventually Syria will fall, the Asad regime will fall, and we have to have somebody who we're working with that we can help pick up the pieces and stitch back together a cohesive, coherent country. And so we will continue to support them.

The training-and-equip program was a specific initiative by the Defense Department to see if we could get some of that moderate opposition to focus attention on ISIL in the eastern portion of the country. And I'm the first one to acknowledge it has not worked the way it was supposed to, Julie. And I think that the Department of Defense would say the same thing. And part of the reason, frankly, is because when we tried to get them to just focus on ISIL, the response we'd get back is, how can we focus on ISIL when every single day we're having barrel bombs and attacks from the regime? And so it's been hard to get them to reprioritize, looking east, when they've got bombs coming at them from the west.

So what we're doing with the train-and-equip is looking at where we have had success—for example, working with some of the Kurdish community in the east that pushed ISIL out—seeing if we can build on that. But what we're also going to continue to do is to have contacts with and work with opposition that rightly believes, in the absence of some change of government inside of Syria we're going to continue to see civil war, and that is going to turbocharge ISIL recruitment and jihadist recruitment, and we're going to continue to have problems.

Now, last point I just want to make about this, because sometimes, the conversation here in the Beltway differs from the conversation internationally: Mr. Putin had to go into Syria not out of strength, but out of weakness, because his client, Mr. Asad, was crumbling. And it was insufficient for him simply to send them arms and money; now he's got to put in his own planes and his own pilots. And the notion that he put forward a plan and that somehow the international community sees that as viable because there is a vacuum there, I didn't see, after he made that speech in the United Nations, suddenly, the 60-nation coalition that we have start lining up behind him.

Iran and Asad make up Mr. Putin's coalition at the moment. The rest of the world makes up ours. So I don't think people are fooled by the current strategy. It does not mean that we could not see Mr. Putin begin to recognize that it is in their interests to broker a political settlement. And as I said in New York, we're prepared to work with the Russians and the Iranians, as well as our partners who are part of the anti-ISIL coalition, to come up with that political transition. And nobody pretends that it's going to be easy, but I think it is still possible. And so we will maintain lines of communication.

But we are not going to be able to get those negotiations going if there is not a recognition that there's got to be a change in government. We're not going to go back to the status quo ante. And the kinds of airstrikes against moderate opposition that Russia is engaging in is going to be counterproductive. It's going to move us farther away rather than towards the

* White House correction.

ultimate solution that we're all—that we all should be looking for.

Q. Do you have any willingness to reconsider a no-fly zone?

The President. Julie, throughout this process, I think people have constantly looked for a easy, low-cost answer. All right? Whether it's we should have sent more rifles in early and somehow then everything would have been okay; or if I had taken that shot even after Asad offered to give up his chemical weapons, then immediately, things would have folded—or the Asad regime would have folded, and we would have suddenly seen a peaceful Syria.

This is a hugely, difficult, complex problem. And I would have hoped that we would have learned that from Afghanistan and Iraq, where we have devoted enormous time and effort and resources with the very best people and have given the Afghan people and the Iraqi people an opportunity for democracy. But it's still hard, as we saw this week in Afghanistan. That's not by virtue of a lack of effort on our part or a lack of commitment. We've still got 10,000 folks in Afghanistan. We're still spending billions of dollars supporting that Government, and it's still tough.

So when I make a decision about the level of military involvement that we're prepared to engage in, in Syria, I have to make a judgment based on, once we start something, we've got to finish it, and we've got to do it well. And do we, in fact, have the resources and the capacity to make a serious impact, understanding that we've still got to go after in ISIL ISIL Iraq, we still have to support the training of an Iraqi military that is weaker than any of us perceived, that we still have business to do in Afghanistan. And so I push, and have consistently over the last 4, 5 years sought out a wide range of opinions about steps that we can take potentially to move Syria in a better direction.

I am under no illusions about what an incredible humanitarian catastrophe this is and the hardships that we're seeing and the refugees that are traveling in very dangerous circumstances and now creating real political problems among our allies in Europe and the heartbreaking images of children drowned trying to escape war and the potential impact of such a destabilized country on our allies in the region. But what we have learned over the last 10, 12, 13 years is that unless we can get the parties on the ground to agree to live together in some fashion, then no amount of U.S. military engagement will solve the problem. And we will find ourselves either doing just a little bit and not making a difference and losing credibility that way or drawing our—finding ourselves drawn in deeper and deeper into a situation that we can't sustain.

So—and when I hear people offering up half-baked ideas as if they are solutions or trying to downplay the challenges involved in this situation, what I'd like to see people ask is, specifically, precisely, what exactly would you do, and how would you fund it, and how would you sustain it? And typically, what you get is a bunch of mumbo jumbo. [*Laughter*]

So these are hard challenges. They are ones that we are going to continue to pursue. The topline message that I want everybody to understand is, we are going to continue to go after ISIL. We are going to continue to reach out to a moderate opposition. We reject Russia's theory that everybody opposed to Asad is a terrorist. We think that is self-defeating. It will get them into a quagmire. It will be used as a further recruitment tool for foreign fighters.

We will work with the international community and our coalition to relieve the humanitarian pressure. On refugees, we are working with the Turks and others to see what we can do along the border to make things safer for people. But ultimately, we're going to have to find a way for a political transition if we're going to solve Syria. Okay?

Jon Karl [ABC News].

2016 Republican Presidential Candidate John E. "Jeb" Bush/Gun Control

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Yes.

Q. Back in July you said that the gun issue has been the most frustrating of your Presidency, and we certainly heard that frustration from you last night.

The President. Yes.

Q. So, in the last 15 months of your Presidency——

The President. Right.

Q. Do you intend to do anything differently to get Congress to act or to do something about this gun violence problem?

And I have to get you to respond to something that Jeb Bush just said, and to be fair to Governor Bush, I want to read it directly.

The President. Okay.

Q. Asked about the drive to take action in light of what happened in Oregon, he said: "Look, stuff happens. There's always a crisis. And the impulse is always to do something, and it's not always the right thing to do." How would you react to Governor Bush?

The President. I don't even think I have to react to that one. [*Laughter*] I think the American people should hear that and make their own judgments, based on the fact that every couple of months, we have a mass shooting, and in terms of—and they can decide whether they consider that "stuff happening."

In terms of what I can do, I've asked my team—as I have in the past—to scrub what kinds of authorities do we have to enforce the laws that we have in place more effectively to keep guns out of the hands of criminals. Are there additional actions that we can take that might prevent even a handful of these tragic deaths from taking place? But as I said last night, this will not change until the politics changes and the behavior of elected officials changes.

And so the main thing I'm going to do is, I'm going to talk about this on a regular basis, and I will politicize it because our inaction is a political decision that we are making.

The reason that Congress does not support even the modest gun safety laws that we proposed after Sandy Hook is not because the majority of the American people don't support it. I mean, normally, politicians are responsive to the views of the electorate. Here you've got the majority of the American people think it's the right thing to do. Background checks, other commonsense steps that would maybe save some lives couldn't even get a full vote. And why is that? It's because of politics. It's because interest groups fund campaigns, feed people fear. And in fairness, it's not just in the Republican Party, although the Republican Party is just uniformly opposed to all gun safety laws. And unless we change that political dynamic, we're not going to be able to make a big dent in this problem.

For example, you'll hear people talk about, "The problem is not guns, it's mental illness." Well, if you talk to people who study this problem, it is true that the majority of these mass shooters are angry young men, but there are hundreds of millions of angry young men around the world—tens of millions of angry young men. Most of them don't shoot. It doesn't help us just to identify—and the majority of people who have mental illnesses are not shooters. So we can't sort through and identify ahead of time who might take actions like this. The only thing we can do is make sure that they can't have an entire arsenal when something snaps in them.

And if we're going to do something about that, the politics has to change. The politics has to change. And the people who are troubled by this have to be as intense and as organized and as adamant about this issue as folks on the other side who are absolutists and think that any gun safety measures are somehow an assault on freedom or communistic or a plot by me to take over and stay in power forever or something. [*Laughter*] I mean, there are all kinds of crackpot conspiracy theories that float around there, some of which, by the way, are ratified by elected officials in the other party on occasion.

So we've got to change the politics of this. And that requires people to feel—not just feel deeply—because I get a lot of letters after this happens: "Do something!" Well, okay, here's what we—here's what you need to do. You have to make sure that anybody who you are voting for is on the right side of this issue. And if they're not, even if they're great on other stuff, for a couple of election cycles, you've got to vote against them and let them know precisely why you're voting against them. And you just have to, for a while, be a single-issue voter

because that's what is happening on the other side.

And that's going to take some time. I mean, the NRA has had a good start. They've been at this a long time; they perfected what they do. You've got to give them credit. They're very effective. Because they don't represent the majority of the American people, but they know how to stir up fear, they know how to stir up their base, they know how to raise money, they know how to scare politicians, they know how to organize campaigns. And the American people are going to have to match them in their sense of urgency if we're actually going to stop this.

Which isn't to say stopping all violence. We're not going to stop all violence. Violence exists around the world, sadly. Part of original sin. But our homicide rates are just a lot higher than other places that, by the way, have the same levels of violence. It's just, they—you can't kill as many people when you don't have easy access to these kinds of weapons.

And I'm deeply saddened about what happened yesterday. But Arne is going back to Chicago; let's not forget, this is happening every single day in forgotten neighborhoods around the country. Every single day. Kids are just running for their lives, trying to get to school. Broderick, when we were down in New Orleans, sitting down with a group of young men, when we were talking about Katrina, and I've got two young men next to me, both of them had been shot multiple times. They were barely 20.

So we've got to make a decision. If we think that's normal, then we have to own it. I don't think it's normal. I think it's abnormal. I think we should change it. But I can't do it by myself.

So main thing I'm going to do, Jon, is talk about it. And hope that over time I'm changing enough minds, along with other leaders around the country, that we start finally seeing some action. I don't think it's going to happen overnight.

Cheryl Bolen [Bloomberg BNA].

Speaker of the House of Representatives/Debt Ceiling/Federal Budget Negotiations/Planned Parenthood

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. To go back to your opening remarks, you said that you won't sign another short-term CR. But as you know, yesterday Secretary Lew announced that the Government's borrowing authority would run out——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——around November 5. Would you recommend negotiating an increase in the debt ceiling as part of these budget negotiations on spending caps? And also, does the Speaker's race complicate these negotiations?

The President. I'm sure the Speaker's race complicates these negotiations. [*Laughter*] That was a rhetorical question. [*Laughter*] It will complicate the negotiations. But when it comes to the debt ceiling, we're not going back there.

Maybe it's been a while, so let me just refresh everybody's memory. [*Laughter*] Raising the debt ceiling does not authorize us to spend more, it simply authorizes us to pay the bills that we have already incurred. It is the way for the United States to maintain its good credit rating, the full faith and credit of the United States.

Historically, we do not mess with it. If it gets messed with, it would have profound implications for the global economy and could put our financial system in the kind of tailspin that we've—saw back in 2007, 2008. It's just a bad thing to do. So we're not going to negotiate on that. It has to get done in the next 5 weeks. So, even though the continuing resolution to keep the Government open lasts for 10 weeks, we have to get the debt ceiling raised in 5. You've got a shorter timetable to get that done.

But here's the bottom line: Mitch McConnell, John Boehner, myself, Nancy Pelosi, Harry Reid—we've all spoken and talked about trying to negotiate a budget agreement. And yes, Speaker Boehner's decision to step down complicates it. But I do think that there is still a path for us to come up with a reasonable agreement that raises the spending caps above

sequester to make sure that we can properly finance both our defense and nondefense needs, that maintains a prudent control of our deficits, and that we can do that in short order. It's not that complicated. It's—there's—the math is the math.

And what I've encouraged is that we get started on that work immediately and we push through over the next several weeks and try to leave out extraneous issues that may prevent us from getting a budget agreement.

I know, for example, that there are many Republicans who are exercised about Planned Parenthood. And I deeply disagree with them on that issue, and I think that it's mischaracterized what Planned Parenthood does. But I understand that they feel strongly about it, and I respect that. But you can't have an issue like that potentially wreck the entire U.S. economy, any more than I should hold the entire budget hostage to my desire to do something about gun violence. I feel just as strongly about that, and I think I've got better evidence for it. But the notion that I would threaten the Republicans that unless they passed gun safety measures that would stop mass shootings I'm going to shut down the Government and not sign an increase in the debt ceiling would be irresponsible of me. And the American people rightly would reject that.

Well, same is true for them. There are some fights that we fight individually. They want to defund Planned Parenthood, there's a way to do it. Pass a law, override my veto. And that's true across a whole bunch of issues that they disagree with me on, and I have—that's how democracy works. I've got no problem with that.

But you have to govern. And I'm hoping that the next Speaker understands that the problem Speaker Boehner had or Mitch McConnell had in not dismantling Obamacare or not eliminating the Department of Education—[*laughter*]—or not deporting every immigrant in this country was not because Speaker Boehner or Mitch McConnell didn't care about conservative principles. It had to do with the fact that they can't do it in our system of government, which requires compromise. Just like I can't do everything I want in passing an immigration bill or passing a gun safety bill. And that doesn't mean, then, I throw a tantrum and try to wreck the economy and put hard-working Americans who are just now able to dig themselves out of a massive recession, put them in harm's way. Wrong thing to do.

Peter Alexander [NBC News].

Gun Violence Prevention Efforts/Mental Illness/Gun Control

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You addressed—I want to follow up on Jon's questions about the issue that's obviously deeply personal and moving to you—that is the gun issue. Apart from Congress's inaction, apart from the desire for new laws and, beyond that, apart from the gun lobby, as you noted, the pattern is that these perpetrators are angry, aggrieved, oftentimes mentally ill young men. Is there something that you can do with the bully pulpit, with your moral authority, with your remaining time in office to help reach these individuals who believe that gun violence is the way out?

The President. No. I think I can continue to speak to the American people as a whole and, hopefully, model for them basic social norms about rejecting violence and cooperation and caring for other people. But there are a lot of young men out there. And having been one myself once, I can tell you that us being able to identify or pinpoint who might have problems is extraordinarily difficult.

So I think we, as a culture, should continuously think about how we can nurture our kids, protect our kids, talk to them about conflict resolution, discourage violence. I think there are poor communities where, rather than mass shootings, you're seeing just normal interactions that used to be settled by a fistfight settled with guns, where maybe intervention programs and mentorship and things like that can work. That's the kind of thing that we're trying to encourage through "My Brother's Keeper."

But when it comes to reaching every disaffected young man, 99 percent of—or 99.9 percent of whom will, hopefully, grow out of it, I don't think that there's a silver bullet there.

The way we are going to solve this problem is that when they act out, when they are disturbed, when that particular individual has a problem, that they can't easily access weapons that can perpetrate mass violence on a lot of people.

Because that's what other countries do. Again, I want to emphasize this. There's no showing that somehow we are inherently more violent than any other advanced nation or that young men are inherently more violent in our Nation than they are in other nations. I will say young men inherently are more violent than the rest of the population, but there's no sense that somehow this is—it's something in the American character that is creating this. Levels of violence are on par between the United States and other advanced countries. What is different is homicide rates and gun violence rates and mass shooting rates. So it's not that the behavior or the impulses are necessarily different as much as it is that they have access to more powerful weapons.

Julia Edwards [Reuters].

U.S. Standing in the World/President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia/Russia's Role in Syria/Russia-U.S. Relations

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You just said that you reject President Putin's approach to Syria and his attacks on moderate opposition forces. You said it was a recipe for disaster. But what are you willing to do to stop President Putin and protect moderate opposition fighters? Would you consider imposing sanctions against Russia? Would you go so far as to equip moderate rebels with antiaircraft weapons to protect them from Russian air attacks? And how do you respond to critics who say Putin is outsmarting you, that he took a measure of you in Ukraine and he felt he could get away with it?

The President. Yes, I've heard it all before. [*Laughter*]

Q. Sorry.

The President. I've got to say, I'm always struck by the degree to which not just critics, but, I think, people buy this narrative.

Let's think about this. [*Laughter*] So when I came into office 7½ years ago, America had precipitated the worst financial crisis in history, dragged the entire world into a massive recession. We were involved in two wars with almost no coalition support. U.S.—world opinion about the United States was at a nadir. We were just barely above Russia at that time, and I think potentially slightly below China's. And we were shedding 800,000 jobs a month, and so on and so forth.

And today, we're the strongest large advanced economy in the world, probably one of the few bright spots in the world economy. Our approval ratings have gone up. We are more active on more international issues and forge international responses to everything from Ebola to countering ISIL.

Meanwhile, Mr. Putin comes into office at a time when the economy hadn't been growing and they were trying to pivot to a more diversified economy, and as a consequence of these brilliant moves, their economy is contracting 4 percent this year. They are isolated in the world community, subject to sanctions that are not just applied by us, but by what used to be some of their closest trading partners. Their main allies in the Middle East were Libya and Syria—Mr. Qaddafi and Mr. Asad—and those countries are falling apart. And he's now just had to send in troops and aircraft in order to prop up this regime, at the risk of alienating the entire Sunni world.

So what was the question again? [*Laughter*]

And no, no—but I think it's really interesting to understand. This is—Russia is not stronger as a consequence of what they've been doing. They get attention. The sanctions against Ukraine are still in place. And what I've consistently offered—from a position of strength, because the United States is not subject to sanctions, and we're not contracting 4 percent a year—what I've offered is a pathway whereby they can get back onto a path of growth and do right by their people.

So Mr. Putin's actions have been successful only insofar as it's boosted his poll ratings inside of Russia, which may be why the Beltway is so impressed, because that tends to be the measure of success. [*Laughter*] Of course, it's

easier to do when you've got a state-controlled media. [*Laughter*]

But this is not a smart, strategic move on Russia's part. And what Russia has now done is not only committed its own troops into a situation in which the overwhelming majority of the Syrian population sees it now as an enemy, but the Sunni population throughout the Middle East is going to see it as a supporter, an endorser, of those barrel bombs landing on kids, at a time when Russia has a significant Muslim population inside of its own borders that it needs to worry about.

So I want Russia to be successful. This is not a contest between the United States and Russia. It is in our interest for Russia to be a responsible, effective actor on the international stage that can share burdens with us, along with China, along with Europe, along with Japan, along with other countries, because the problems we have are big. So I'm hopeful that Mr. Putin, having made this doubling down of the support he has provided to Mr. Asad, recognizes that this is not going to be a good long-term strategy and that he works instead to bring about a political settlement.

Just as I hope that they can resolve the issues with Ukraine in a way that recognizes Russian equities, but upholds the basic principle of sovereignty and independence that the Ukrainian people should enjoy like everybody else. But until that time, we're going to continue to have tensions, and we're going to continue to have differences.

But we're not going to make Syria into a proxy war between the United States and Russia. That would be bad strategy on our part. This is a battle between Russia, Iran, and Asad against the overwhelming majority of the Syrian people. Our battle is with ISIL, and our battle is, with the entire international community, to resolve the conflict in a way that can end the bloodshed and end the refugee crisis and allow people to be at home, work, grow food, shelter their children, send those kids to school. That's the side we're on.

This is not some superpower chessboard contest. And anybody who frames it in that way isn't paying very close attention to what's been happening on the chessboard.

All right, last question. Major Garrett [CBS News].

Q. Mr. President, good to see you.

The President. Good to see you.

Q. And for the children there, I promise I won't take too long. So you've been very patient.

The President. I've been boring them to death, I guarantee it. [*Laughter*] But there have been times where I've snagged rebounds for Ryan when he is shooting 3-pointers, so he has got to put up with this. [*Laughter*]

Democratic Presidential Candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton/Syria/Vice President Joe Biden/Pope Francis

Q. Understand—understood. Mr. President, I wonder if you could tell the country to what degree you were changed or moved by what you discussed in private with Pope Francis, what you think his visit might have meant for the country long term? And for Democrats who might already be wondering, is it too late for Joe Biden to decide whether or not to run for President? And lastly, just to clarify, were you—to what degree did Hillary Clinton's endorsement just yesterday of a no-fly zone put her in a category of embracing a half-baked answer in Syria that borders on mumbo jumbo?

The President. The—on the latter issue, on the last question that you asked, Hillary Clinton is not half baked in terms of her approach to these problems. She was obviously my Secretary of State. But I also think that there's a difference between running for President and being President, and the decisions that are being made and the discussions that I'm having with the Joint Chiefs become much more specific and require, I think, a different kind of judgment. And that's what I'll continue to apply as long as I'm here. And if and when she's President, then she'll make those judgments. And she's been there enough that she knows that these are tough calls, but that——

Q. Are you suggesting she should know better?

The President. No, that's not what I said. That's perhaps what you said. What I'm saying is, is that we all want to try to relieve the suffering in Syria, but my job is to make sure that whatever we do we are doing in a way that serves the national security interests of the American people; that doesn't lead to us getting into things that we can't get out of or that we cannot do effectively; and as much as possible, that we're working with international partners.

And we're going to continue to explore things that we can do to protect people and to deal with the humanitarian situation there and to provide a space in which we can bring about a—the kind of political transition that's going to be required to solve the problem. And I think Hillary Clinton would be the first to say that when you're sitting in the seat that I'm sitting in, in the Situation Room, things look a little bit different, because she's been right there next to me.

I love Joe Biden, and he's got his own decisions to make, and I'll leave it at that. And in the meantime, he's doing a great job as Vice President and has been really helpful on a whole bunch of issues.

Pope Francis I love. He is a good man with a warm heart and a big moral imagination. And I think he had such an impact in his visit here—as he has had around the world—because he cares so deeply about the least of these and, in that sense, expresses what I consider to be, as a Christian, the essence of Christianity. And he's got a good sense of humor. [*Laughter*] And, well, I can't share all of his jokes. They were all clean. [*Laughter*]

The—and as I said in the introduction in the South Lawn when he appeared here at the White House, I think it's really useful that he makes us uncomfortable in his gentle way; that he's constantly prodding people's consciences and asking everybody all across the political spectrum what more you can do to be kind and to be helpful and to love and to sacrifice and to serve. And in that sense, I don't think he's somebody where we should be applying the typical American political measures, liberal and conservative, and left and right; I think he is speaking to all of our consciences, and we all have to then search ourselves to see if there are ways that we can do better.

Q. Did that happen to you?

The President. I—it did. I think that when I spend time with somebody like the Pontiff—and there are other individuals, some of whom are famous, some of whom are not, but who are good people and deeply moral—then it makes me want to be better, makes me want to do better. And those people are great gifts to the world. And sometimes, they're just a teacher in a classroom. And sometimes, they're your neighbor. And sometimes, they're your mom or your wife. Sometimes, they're your kids. But they can encourage you to be better. That's what we're all trying to do.

I think—and that's part of the wonderful thing about Pope Francis, is the humility that he brings to do this. His rejection of the absolutism that says, I'm a hundred-percent right, and you're a hundred-percent wrong; but rather, we are all sinners, and we are all children of God. And that's a pretty good starting point for being better.

All right? Thank you, guys, for your patience. You can now go home. [*Laughter*] All right. Thanks.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 3:55 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Claire and Ryan Duncan, children of Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, and Amina and Mireya King, children of Acting Secretary–designate of Education John B. King, Jr., who were in the audience attending the remarks on the resignation of Secretary Duncan and appointment of Acting Secretary–designate King, which directly preceded the news conference; and Cabinet Secretary Broderick D. Johnson. H.R. 719, the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016, was approved September 30 and assigned Public Law No. 114–53.

Statement on the Crash of a United States Air Force C–130J Aircraft in Jalalabad, Afghanistan

October 2, 2015

Michelle and I extend our deepest condolences and sympathies to the families of the six U.S. airmen and five contractors who lost their lives in a military plane crash in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, yesterday. In addition to the Americans we mourn, we also are saddened that Afghan civilians lost their lives in this incident. As we mark this terrible loss of life, we are reminded of the sacrifice brave Americans and our Afghan partners make each and every day in the name of freedom and security. Their willingness to serve so selflessly will not be forgotten. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims' families and loved ones during this difficult hour. May God bless their souls.

NOTE: The statement referred to Capt. Jonathan Golden, USAF; Capt. Jordan Pierson, USAF; S. Sgt. Ryan Hammond, USAF; SrA Quinn Johnson-Harris, USAF; SrA Nathan Sartain, USAF; and A1C Kcey E. Ruiz, USAF.

The President's Weekly Address

October 3, 2015

Hi, everybody. Yesterday we learned that our businesses created another 118,000 new jobs in September. That makes 67 straight months of job creation and 13.2 million new jobs in all. But we'd be doing even better if we didn't have to keep dealing with crises in Congress every few months. And especially at a time when the global economy is softening, our own growth could slow if Congress doesn't do away with harmful austerity measures.

Now, on Wednesday, more than half of Republicans in Congress voted to shut down the Government for the second time in 2 years. Fortunately, there were enough votes in both parties to pass a last-minute bill to keep the Government open for another 10 weeks. Unfortunately, that gimmick only sets up another shutdown threat 2 weeks before Christmas.

Look, that's not the way America should operate. It just kicks the can down the road without solving any problems or doing any long-term planning for the future. And that's why I will not sign another shortsighted, short-term spending bill like the one Congress sent me this week.

Here's why. A few years ago, both parties agreed to put in place what have proven to be harmful, automatic cuts that make no distinction between spending we don't need and spending we do. Those cuts have actually kept our economy from growing faster. Even worse, they're actually undermining the middle class.

And here's one example. If we don't undo these mindless cuts, then next year, we'll be funding our kids' education at the same levels per pupil we did in the year 2000. Compared to my budget, that would be like cutting Federal funding for 4,500 schools, 17,500 teachers and aides, 1.9 million students. That's not good for our kids or our economy. It's a prescription for American decline. And it shouldn't happen. We should invest in things like education today, or we're going to pay the price tomorrow.

So Congress should do its job, stop kicking the can down the road, and pass a serious budget rather than flirt with another shutdown. A serious budget is one that keeps America strong through our military and law enforcement; that keeps America generous through caring for our veterans and our seniors; that keeps America competitive by educating our kids and our workers.

That's what I want to work with serious people in both parties to achieve. Because that's how we'll build on the progress of 13 million new jobs and help the middle class get ahead.

Thanks, everybody, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:45 p.m. on October 2 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on October 3. In the address, the President referred to H.R. 719, Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016, which was approved September 30 and assigned Public Law No. 114–53. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 2, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on October 3.

Statement on the 50th Anniversary of the Immigration and Nationality Act
October 3, 2015

Fifty years ago, at the foot of the Statute of Liberty, President Johnson signed the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). The new, bipartisan law ended an unfair quota system, prohibited discrimination based on country of origin, and officially recognized our immigration system's role in reuniting families and attracting skilled workers, all of whom help fuel our economy. The Republicans and Democrats who came together to pass the INA were driven by a desire to expand opportunity for all and to live up to our heritage as a nation of immigrants. They understood that immigration contributes to our economic growth by allowing hard-working, entrepreneurial individuals from around the world to pursue the American dream.

As we mark the 50th anniversary of this transformational law, we honor the courage of those who fought to make our system better. We celebrate the generations of immigrants who have shaped this country and helped make America great. And we recommit ourselves to fighting for commonsense, comprehensive immigration reform legislation that meets the needs of the 21st century, grows the economy for everybody, and lives up to our highest ideals.

Statement on Civilian Casualties at the Doctors Without Borders Hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan
October 3, 2015

On behalf of the American people, I extend my deepest condolences to the medical professionals and other civilians killed and injured in the tragic incident at a Doctors Without Borders hospital in Kunduz. The Department of Defense has launched a full investigation, and we will await the results of that inquiry before making a definitive judgment as to the circumstances of this tragedy. I have asked the Department of Defense to keep me apprised of the investigation and expect a full accounting of the facts and circumstances. Michelle and I offer our thoughts and prayers to all of the civilians affected by this incident, their families, and loved ones. We will continue to work closely with President Ghani, the Afghan Government, and our international partners to support the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces as they work to secure their country.

Remarks at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service in Emmitsburg, Maryland
October 4, 2015

Thank you. Please. Craig, thanks for that introduction, but more importantly, thank you for the outstanding work that you and your team do all across the country every single day. For those of you who know Craig, you know that he is cool under pressure, no doubt because he got his start—started his career—as a firefighter. I want to thank Congressman Steny

Hoyer, Fire Administrator Ernest Mitchell, Chief Dennis Compton, and everybody at the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation for bringing us together here today. And most especially, I want to say how honored I am to be with the families of the fallen, and express the gratitude of the nation for the sacrifices that you and your families have made on behalf of others.

Scripture tells us, "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." Employ it in serving one another. Every single day, across our country, men and women leave their homes and their families so they might save the lives of people that they've never met. They are good stewards, serving their neighbors, their communities, our Nation with courage and fortitude and strength. We can never repay them fully for their sacrifices.

But today we gather to honor 87 brave firefighters who gave their lives in service to us all. Our prayers are with their families, many of whom honor us with their presence today. You remember them as moms and dads, siblings and spouses, friends and neighbors. Today we remember them and salute them as the heroes that they were.

It's hard to think of a more selfless profession than firefighting. There's a reason why firefighting occupies a special place in our imaginations; why little boys and increasingly little girls say, I want to be a fireman, I want to be a firefighter. They understand instinctually that there's something special about it. Imagine what it takes to put on that heavy coat and that helmet and override the natural human instinct for self-preservation and run into danger as others are running away; to literally walk through fire knowing that you might never make it out because you're trying to save people that are strangers.

And yet the fallen that we honor today would probably have said that they were just ordinary Americans who were doing work they believed in, carrying on a tradition as old as America itself. There's a humility that seems to be part of being a firefighter. From rural communities to inner cities, those we honor today lived a fundamental principle that binds us all as Americans: that I am my brother's keeper, I am my sister's keeper; that we look out for one another; that there's something bigger than each of us individually that we have to be true to.

We honor men like Michael Garrett of West Virginia. Mikey, as he was known, started out as a junior firefighter at the age of 16, became an EMT by 18, was on his way to graduating with an associate degree in emergency services. His mom Faith says Mikey was always smiling, always a practical joker; if you turned around, your cell phone would be in the pool. [*Laughter*] And he was always the guy you could call on in a pinch. No matter how busy he was—between school and work and being an EMT instructor himself—he'd be there to help.

And in February of last year, Mikey was pulling a seriously injured utility worker out of harm's way when a cell tower came crashing down. And he was only 28 years old—28 years old. He's survived by Faith, his dad Dale, his four siblings. And he will always be remembered by his community as a good man devoted to helping others; that's who he was. And he typifies what it means to be a firefighter and to serve others.

That's who Kevin Bell was too. Kevin was that rare combination of full-time firefighter and part-time DJ. [*Laughter*] His wife Wayette says that the day he graduated from the fire academy in Connecticut was one of the happiest days of his life. And he truly loved his work, and his kindness and generosity were widely known. And like so many firefighters, he never talked about his heroic actions. His daughter Raquel says that she would later hear from those he had helped, above and beyond the call of duty: the friend he had assisted after a car accident, the classmate he drove to the hospital after an epileptic seizure.

Last October, Kevin gave his life battling a house fire. He is survived by Wayette and Raquel, his parents, and his siblings. Because of the role model Kevin was, there are African American kids in his Hartford neighborhood who want to be firefighters just like him. And

one day, they'll be able to go to work in the Kevin Lamont Bell Fire Station.

We honor heroes like Malcolm Jenkins of Louisville, Kentucky. Malcolm was the "go-to guy" in the firehouse; no task was too big or too small. He was the guy who could fix anything, which his wife Sharon says taught his three daughters an important lesson: Marry a man who can fix everything that you can break. [*Laughter*]

Malcolm was a farmer when, many years ago, the county put out the call for volunteer firefighters. He rose to become a major and helped develop the Kentucky Regional Fire Training Academy, which has trained hundreds of firefighters to serve their communities. Last October, Malcolm succumbed to a heart attack. And today, in Malcolm Jenkins, we remember not just a great firefighter, but a loving son, husband, father, grandfather, and friend.

These are the kinds of individuals we honor today. And even as we honor these 87 heroes, we know that their work is carried on by firefighters all across our Nation—by so many of you—with that same bravery and that same dedication, that same sense of duty, that same humility, that same love of country.

In recent years, you've battled some of the most severe wildfire seasons in American history. So far this year, nearly 50,000 wildfires have burned more than 9 million acres, an area larger than the entire State of Maryland. At the season's peak, 32,000 firefighters were battling blazes from California to North Carolina. Thirteen have lost their lives. And today we honor them as well. And we reaffirm that, as a nation, we must work to prevent fires, and we must give firefighters the equipment and the support that they need to get the job done and to come home safe; that's what we owe every one of you.

And finally, this memorial also pays tribute to names that do not appear on this wall. It's a testament to you, the families of these individuals: the families who stand alongside every firefighter across this Nation. Because the brotherhood of firefighting doesn't stop at the firehouse door. It extends to every community across our country: to every mom and dad, every spouse, every child who waits for their loved one to come home at the end of a shift. All of you are united by an unbreakable bond of strength and sacrifice. This is your family too.

For the families of the fallen, we know that words alone can't ease the pain of your loss. But perhaps it helps a little bit to know that the American people stand with you in honoring your loved ones. We admire them. We cherish the work that they do. We hold you in our hearts, today and always. We offer you our deepest condolences and our prayers and our eternal gratitude.

These are extraordinary people that we honor here today. They're extraordinary Americans. They set an example for us all. May God bless these fallen heroes. May he watch over their families and all who protect us. May their shining example inspire us all in our own lives: "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:29 a.m. in Memorial Gym at Mount Saint Mary's University. In his remarks, he referred to W. Craig Fugate, Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency; Dennis Compton, chairman of the board of directors, National Fallen Firefighters Foundation; Justin M. Brady, Julie A. Freeman, Anna M. Roberts, and Katie E. Garrett, siblings of Michael D. Garrett, firefighter, Nutter Fort Fire Department, who died in the line of duty in Summit Park, WV, on February 1, 2014; and Sharon Jenkins, wife, and Andrea Bailey, Samantha Jenkins, and Danielle Jenkins, daughters, of Maj. Malcolm W. Jenkins, Fern Creek Fire Department, who died on October 30, 2014.

Statement on the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement
October 5, 2015

I've spent every day of my Presidency fighting to grow our economy and strengthen our middle class. That means making sure our workers have a fair shot to get ahead here at home, and a fair chance to compete around the world. My approach to trade has been guided by a unifying principle: leveling the playing field for American workers and businesses so we can export more products stamped "Made in America" all over the world that support higher paying American jobs here at home.

Over the summer, Democrats and Republicans in Congress came together to help the United States negotiate agreements for free and fair trade that would support our workers, our businesses, and our economy as a whole. When more than 95 percent of our potential customers live outside our borders, we can't let countries like China write the rules of the global economy. We should write those rules, opening new markets to American products while setting high standards for protecting workers and preserving our environment.

That's what the agreement reached today in Atlanta will do. Trade Ministers from the 12 nations that make up the Trans-Pacific Partnership finished negotiations on an agreement that reflects America's values and gives our workers the fair shot at success they deserve.

This partnership levels the playing field for our farmers, ranchers, and manufacturers by eliminating more than 18,000 taxes that various countries put on our products. It includes the strongest commitments on labor and the environment of any trade agreement in history, and those commitments are enforceable, unlike in past agreements. It promotes a free and open Internet. It strengthens our strategic relationships with our partners and allies in a region that will be vital to the 21st century. It's an agreement that puts American workers first and will help middle class families get ahead.

Once negotiators have finalized the text of this partnership, Congress and the American people will have months to read every word before I sign it. I look forward to working with lawmakers from both parties as they consider this agreement. If we can get this agreement to my desk, then we can help our businesses sell more "Made in America" goods and services around the world, and we can help more American workers compete and win.

Statement on the Death of Grace Lee Boggs
October 5, 2015

Michelle and I were saddened to hear of the passing of author, philosopher, and activist Grace Lee Boggs. Grace dedicated her life to serving and advocating for the rights of others: from her community activism in Detroit, to her leadership in the civil rights movement, to her ideas that challenged us all to lead meaningful lives. As the child of Chinese immigrants and as a woman, Grace learned early on that the world needed changing, and she overcame barriers to do just that. She understood the power of community organizing at its core: the importance of bringing about change and getting people involved to shape their own destiny. Grace's passion for helping others and her work to rejuvenate communities that had fallen on hard times spanned her remarkable 100 years of life and will continue to inspire generations to come. Our thoughts and prayers are with Grace's family and friends and all those who loved her dearly.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the United States-Algeria Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters
October 5, 2015

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, signed at Algiers on April 7, 2010. I also transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty. The Treaty is one of a series of modern mutual legal assistance treaties negotiated by the United States to more effectively counter criminal activities. The Treaty should enhance our ability to investigate and prosecute a wide variety of crimes.

The Treaty provides for a broad range of cooperation in criminal matters. Under the Treaty, the Parties agree to assist each other by, among other things: producing evidence (such as testimony, documents, or items) obtained voluntarily or, where necessary, by compulsion; arranging for persons, including persons in custody, to travel to provide evidence; serving documents; executing searches and seizures; locating and identifying persons or items; and freezing and forfeiting assets or property that may be the proceeds or instrumentalities of crime.

I recommend the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty, and give its advice and consent to ratification.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
October 5, 2015.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Agriculture and Business Leaders on the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement
October 6, 2015

Well, yesterday we announced a new trade agreement across the Asia-Pacific region that reflects American values and gives our working families and American businesses a fair shot, creates a level playing field. The Trans-Pacific Partnership took 5 years to negotiate, and I wanted to get the best possible deal done for American workers and American businesses, and that is what we have achieved.

This agreement makes us more competitive by eliminating about 18,000 taxes, tariffs that are placed on America's products in these other countries. Just to give you a couple examples, Japan puts a 38-percent tax on American beef before it ever reaches market. Malaysia currently puts a 30-percent tax on American auto parts. Vietnam puts a tax of as much as 70 percent on every car American automakers sell in Vietnam.

Under this agreement, all those foreign taxes will fall. Most of them will fall to zero. So we are knocking down barriers that are currently preventing American businesses from selling in these countries and are preventing American workers from benefiting from those sales to the fastest growing, most dynamic region in the world.

This agreement opens up new markets for goods that are made in America. Last year, we exported more than $2 trillion worth of goods and services, which supported about 11.7 million American jobs. That's the fifth-straight year that we had set an export record. But when 95 percent of the world's markets are outside of our borders, we've got to do even better than that, particularly at a time when our economy is actually doing better than a lot of other countries and they want to sell stuff

here. We've got to make sure that we're able to sell stuff over there.

With this trade agreement, which spans nearly 40 percent of the global economy, we're going to be able to sell more products, more services, American agriculture, American manufacturing—we're going to be able to get those to markets, and American companies that produce here in the United States are not going to be disadvantaged relative to these markets.

Keep in mind that when there are high barriers in these countries, oftentimes, that's when a lot of American companies feel compelled, if we want to reach those markets, we've got to go produce over there. If the tariffs are down, if the taxes are down on goods made in America, that means U.S. companies that are investing here are able to sell over there without a disadvantage. That's what American leadership looks like in the 21st century. And that's why this agreement also sets high standards for one of the fastest growing regions of the world.

This agreement has the strongest labor standards of any trade agreement in history, including setting fair hours, prohibiting child labor, prohibiting forced labor. It includes the highest environmental standards in history and prevents overfishing and makes sure that wildlife trafficking isn't decimating wildlife that are a world treasure.

And so, unlike past agreements, these standards—high standards around labor and environment—are actually enforceable. If countries aren't abiding by them, then they don't get the benefits of selling to the United States under the terms of this agreement. And, under this agreement, we, rather than countries like China, are writing rules for the global economy.

So I've said repeatedly that I would only sign an agreement and present an agreement to Congress if I could be absolutely certain that it was good for American workers and good for American businesses, good for American farmers and good for American ranchers, and good for American manufacturers. We have met that standard in this agreement.

So this week marks an important step forward, but there's going to be a long, healthy process of discussion and consultation and debate before this ever comes to an actual vote. And we committed properly that we would post this agreement, every crossed t and dotted i, on a website so that everybody is going to be able to look at it. We are going to be talking not just to Members of Congress, but the American public and various constituencies, and Governors and mayors who are represented here about why this is good for their communities.

And so we're going to have months before this actually comes up for a vote. People are going to have plenty of time to go over it. I suspect that there will be some misinformation that is propagated around this, as there usually is in these debates. But I'm also confident that the case to be made for why this is good for America is sufficiently strong, that ultimately we're going to get this done and it will be a enormous achievement for us to be able to make sure that 40 percent of the world's economy is operating under rules that don't hurt us, but instead help make sure that American workers and American businesses are getting a fair shot and that "Made in America," those products and services can be sold in places where there's going to be significant demand.

So I want to thank everybody around this table. This is a diverse constituency. A lot of different groups are represented here. We want to thank all of them for their work in getting us to this point, and now helping us get across the finish line.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:02 p.m. in the Williamsburg Room at the Department of Agriculture.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the United States-Czech Republic Supplementary Social Security Agreement
October 6, 2015

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 233(e)(1) of the Social Security Act, as amended by the Social Security Amendments of 1977 (Public Law 95–216, 42 U.S.C. 433(e)(1)), I transmit herewith the Supplementary Agreement Amending the Agreement on Social Security between the United States of America and the Czech Republic (the "Supplementary Agreement"). The Supplementary Agreement, signed at Prague on September 23, 2013, is intended to modify a certain provision of the Agreement on Social Security between the United States of America and the Czech Republic, with Administrative Arrangement, signed at Prague on September 7, 2007, and entered into force January 1, 2009 (the "U.S.-Czech Social Security Agreement").

The U.S.-Czech Social Security Agreement as amended by the Supplementary Agreement is similar in objective to the social security agreements already in force with most European Union countries, Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, Norway, and the Republic of Korea. Such bilateral agreements provide for limited coordination between the United States and foreign social security systems to eliminate dual social security coverage and taxation, and to help prevent the lost benefit protection that can occur when workers divide their careers between two countries.

The Supplementary Agreement amends the U.S.-Czech Social Security Agreement to account for a new Czech domestic health insurance law, which was enacted subsequent to the signing of the U.S.-Czech Social Security Agreement in 2007. By including the health insurance law within the scope of the U.S.-Czech Social Security Agreement, this amendment will exempt U.S. citizen workers and multinational companies from contributing to the Czech health insurance system, when such workers otherwise meet all of the ordinary criteria for such an exemption.

The U.S.-Czech Social Security Agreement, as amended, will continue to contain all provisions mandated by section 233 of the Social Security Act and other provisions that I deem appropriate to carry out the purposes of section 233, pursuant to section 233(c)(4) of the Social Security Act.

I also transmit for the information of the Congress a report required by section 233(e)(1) of the Social Security Act on the estimated number of individuals who will be affected by the Supplementary Agreement and its estimated cost effect. The Department of State and the Social Security Administration have recommended the Supplementary Agreement and related documents to me.

I commend the Supplementary Agreement to the U.S.-Czech Social Security Agreement and related documents.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
October 6, 2015.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Joachim Gauck of Germany
October 7, 2015

President Obama. Well, it is a great honor to have a great friend of the United States, President Gauck, visit the Oval Office. It gives me an opportunity to repay the hospitality that the President extended to me during one of my visits to Germany.

Although it's well-known in Germany, I—for American audiences, some people may not be aware of the President's extraordinary life and the role that he's played in creating a modern, unified, democratic, and peaceful Germany. As a pastor and a democratic activist in

Eastern Germany, he played an important role in giving voice to the aspirations of all those who sought a unified Germany that reflected the values that we now see in that great country.

And as Germany recently marked an important milestone in reunification, it's a great reminder that not only was reunification important for Germany, but it was important for Europe, it was important for the transatlantic relationship, and it was important for the world.

Germany obviously is one of our strongest allies. And the President continues to give voice to the importance of the U.S.-German relationship, to the values of tolerance and democracy and human rights and freedom that are so important to both of our countries. On a wide range of international issues—from the tragic situation in Syria and the need for a humane response to the refugee crisis, to a peaceful resolution that prevents Iran from getting a nuclear weapon—the President's voice has been clear in helping Germany make its mark on the world stage and serve as an incredibly important partner for us.

And I think his travel itinerary here in the United States, visiting Philadelphia and seeing the Liberty Bell, visits here to the King Memorial and the Lincoln Memorial, I think are indicative of the shared values, both democratic and religious and humanist, that are so important to the President, important to Germany, and important to the American people.

So we welcome him. I look forward to an excellent discussion about how we can further deepen our already extraordinarily strong ties and deeply appreciate the work that he's done on behalf of Germany and on behalf of the world.

President Gauck. Mr. President, I would like to thank you very much for having invited me. Your invitation reaches me at the age—at a time where I've turned 75. And in that lifespan of mine, the United States of America have twice expressed their strong support for a positive development of Germany and thus have had a positive influence on German development.

And my visit has to be viewed in a broader historical context. Seventy years ago, Germany suffered a vast defeat, a defeat that then turned into a liberation for the country. Many Americans gave their lives at that time in order to bring out that liberation. Twenty-five years ago, my country became reunited. Americans like the then-President George W. Bush Senior and other Americans have expressed their strong support firmly and early on in ensuring that Germany became united. One cannot but express one's gratitude for that fact. And this is how I want my visit to be understood.

It is in this context that you have mentioned the places I've had the pleasure to visit during my visit here. In Philadelphia, I went to see Liberty Bell and Independence Hall. I went to the room in which important documents of importance for the integrity of the United States of America—freedom for everyone, that is, a nation of liberty—are displayed.

I went to visit the Lincoln Memorial, to remember Martin Luther King, and thus I expect that, above and beyond the topics that we will discuss today and that we need to discuss because they are of importance and affect us these days, my visit is also to be understood as kind of pilgrimage to the birthplace of a country that embodies very important concepts and ideas, ideas that are important for the American people, but also for the history of mankind.

Thus, I have the expectations that, as I said, of course, we are going to talk about topical issues, but we will also have the opportunity to address the odd problem in that context, but I also want to do that, expressing my full awareness of the fact that the relations between our countries and peoples are firmly based on a solid, longstanding foundation.

Mr. President, I am very grateful that you have raised a topic that has turned into a burning issue these days, one of the major problems on our agenda, and that is the present situation in Syria, which is very complicated and complex indeed. We are not yet in a position where we could claim that we have found the appropriate response to this problem and this crisis, and as the crisis unfolds, we are faced with a situation that faces another difficult situation

for us, and that is the great influx of a great number of refugees, of people who are fearing for their lives and thus are leaving their home country.

Now, Germany, because of its history, is a country that shows great readiness to allow these people into its country to provide—to offer asylum for these people in dire need. And this is why this issue has very much moved into the focus of political debate and to the top of Germany's or Europe's political agenda these days.

We are quite aware of the fact that this is a major humanitarian challenge that we have to address. And my hope would be, my wish would be that a realization that that awareness does not only exist in Europe, but it's also something that is recognized in the United States of America. And I also have the sincere hope and wish that we may succeed in finding a solution on the one hand for these people who are fleeing their country, but also a solution that will allow us to tackle the problem at its root causes.

We are very close here, Mr. President. Every side is trying to do its bit. And I'm very grateful for the fact—[*inaudible*].

It is in this sense that I would like to convey the heartfelt greetings of the Federal Chancellor to you, Mr. President. At the same time, I would like to thank you for the very kind words you have found as regards my personal life and myself as a person.

I still remember very fondly the joy felt by the German people when you for the first time came to pay a visit to my country. And that feeling of openness and joy was a feeling that was addressed to you, Mr. President, but it was also Germans' hearts going out to the American people and to the Nobel Peace Laureate, Barack Obama. And I think that that is an illustration of the fact that, despite the disagreements and misunderstandings that occur every once in a while—and I think that is only natural, in a way, amongst partners—we are very close. We are cooperating closely. We share common values. And I would wish to underline this here and now once again.

President Obama. Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, President Gauck referred to Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany. President Gauck spoke in German, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at the White House Summit on Worker Voice
October 7, 2015

The President. Thank you so much. Well, everybody, please have a seat. Welcome to the White House. Let me offer at the outset the observation that Terrance could run for something. [*Laughter*] But we're so grateful to you for sharing your story, for everything you're doing to organize and inspire Americans across the country. You already recognized your mom Joann, another fast-food worker who's come up today from South Carolina. This is actually a remarkable moment: Neither of them make enough money to be able to afford to travel much, so this is the first time Terrance and Joann have seen each other in 10 years.

Audience members. Aww!

The President. Ten years apart because they don't earn enough to be able to just hop on a plane and visit each other.

The only problem I have with this story is that I am not sure that Joann is old enough to actually be Terrance's mom—[*laughter*]—based on how she's looking there. [*Laughter*]

Their story describes why we wanted to have this summit. Their story describes why workers need a voice. That's why our Secretary of Labor, Tom Perez, is here, and I should add, this is a pretty good way for the Labor Secretary to celebrate his birthday.

That's why we've got our outstanding leader in the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, here. And Senator Al Franken is here. And

Congressman Gregory Meeks is here. And Congresswoman Frederica Wilson is here. Because they have consistently been on the frontlines of championing the interests and the concerns of ordinary people who are working hard every single day and aren't asking for the world. All they're asking for is dignity and living wages and being able to take care of their families.

That's why we've got business and labor leaders here today, including the head of the AFL–CIO, Rich Trumka, who's been fighting these issues for decades. And that's why we've got workers and organizers and tech experts and so many others at this first-ever White House Summit on Workers' Voice.

And we convened this summit because we believe that this is a country where if we work hard, everybody should be able to get ahead; that the story of America has been each successive generation, getting an education where they could, working hard, saving, scrimping, making sure their kids get a little something better, hoping that at the end of the day, they're able to have a home of their own and be able to retire with some dignity and some respect, have basic benefits so that if they get sick, their families aren't bankrupt.

And make no mistake, Americans have been working harder than ever to bring this country back, to move it forward. After the worst crisis in my lifetime, back in 2007, we were able to take the unemployment rate that was around 10 all the way down to 5.1. Businesses were shedding about 800,000 jobs a month; today, they've created jobs for 67 straight months, three-point—13.2 million jobs in total.

When I took office, our auto industry was flatlining. Manufacturing had been in decline for a decade. Today, we're on pace to sell more American cars than in any year since 2001. And we've seen stronger job growth in manufacturing than any time since the 1990s. Our manufacturers are coming back; hundreds of thousands of good middle class jobs are being created.

When I took office, more than 15 percent of the American people were uninsured; today, only 9.2 percent are uninsured. And for the first time on record, more than 90 percent of Americans have health insurance.

So we've made progress together. At a time when America's economy was flat on its back, we took some tough steps, not always popular, and we were able to get the economy growing again. But what I've said all along is that it wasn't enough just to get back to where we were before the financial crisis, before Lehman's, before the great recession. We had to tackle problems that had been building up for decades. And the central problem in our economy that had been building up for decades is the fact that while folks at the top did very well, ordinary workers were seeing their wages and their incomes flatlining.

And so the biggest challenge America continues to have is making sure that everybody in this new economy is participating, everybody who works hard is getting paid a decent wage with decent benefits, everybody has some basic economic security, and that the incredible productivity and wealth and innovation that has been a hallmark of the American economy is broadly based.

Wages need to rise more quickly. We need jobs to offer the kind of pay and benefits that let people raise a family. And in order to do that, workers need a voice. They need the voice and the leverage that guarantees this kind of middle class security.

And that's true now more than ever, during this time of rapid economic change. In recent years, we've seen an explosion of American innovation in the workforce. And because of technology, people are empowered and employers are empowered to create value and services in new ways.

We've got folks who are getting a paycheck driving for Uber or Lyft; people who are cleaning other people's houses through Handy; offering their skills on TaskRabbit. And so there's flexibility and autonomy and opportunity for workers. And millennials love working their phones—[*laughter*]—much quicker than I can. [*Laughter*] And all this is promising. But if the combination of globalization and automation undermines the capacity of the ordinary worker and the ordinary family to be able

to support themselves, if employers are able to use these factors to weaken workers' voices and give them a take-it-or-leave-it deal in which they don't have a chance to ever save for the kind of retirement they're looking for, if we don't refashion the social compact so that workers are able to be rewarded properly for the labor that they put in—people like Terrance—then we're going to have problems.

And it's not just going to be a problem for our politics, creating resentment and anxiety; it's going be a problem for our economy because the history shows that when we do best as an economy, it's when workers have money in their pockets and they're able to buy goods and services. And they, in turn, create new demand and create new opportunity and create the kinds of markets that businesses can then take advantage of. That's just a fact.

So we've got to make sure that as we continue to move forward, both in this new on-demand economy and in the traditional economy as a whole, hard work guarantees some security. And that's what this summit is about: making sure that, as our economy continues to evolve, working Americans don't get lost in the shuffle. They can come together and they can win.

And we can do this. We've done it before. There was a time when we shifted from an agrarian economy to an industrial economy. And as we did, we made some adjustments to our arrangements. We said, you know what, we're going to offer everybody a free public education. We put together the New Deal, put in place systems like Social Security so that people had some basic protections in their golden years. We've put together labor laws that allowed for collective bargaining and banned child labor and allowed people to raise their voices and have some leverage in seeking a living wage.

Labor unions were often the driving force for progress: the 40-hour workweek, overtime pay, health insurance, retirement plans. The middle class itself was built on a union label. And that middle class that was built was the engine of our prosperity. And people at the top were doing just fine during these periods. We had a lot of wealth. They—the top 1 percent, the top 10 percent still claimed the much larger share of income and wealth than everybody else, but it was in the context of a dynamic economy where wages and incomes were rising and most Americans felt stable and secure. The future looked brighter than the past.

Now, the economy is changing again. Technology has made it easier for companies to do more with less. They have world markets and the capacity to shift operations along the global supply chain.

Special interests argued that worker protections—including unions themselves—were to blame for middle class struggles, and unfortunately, too many folks bought into that. So union enrollment dropped precipitously. Oftentimes, companies became more sophisticated about keeping out unions. Workers, fearing that they might lose their job to offshoring or to moving down to a right-to-work State, felt less confident about negotiations.

Our culture as a whole started somehow extolling "greed is good," instead of, how do we work together to create a good society for everybody. Jobs began—as a consequence, began paying less, offering fewer benefits. And in recent years, we've seen more companies cut costs by hiring contractors and "perma-temps"—workers who are laboring side by side with full-time employees, but don't earn the same pay and benefits and job security. That's a bad phrase: "perma-temps." [*Laughter*]

The bottom line is, as union membership has fallen, inequality has risen. Union membership today is as low as it's been in about 80 years, since the thirties. And I believe that when folks attack unions, they're attacking the middle class. They're attacking cops, firefighters, teachers, nurses, service workers, public servants, autoworkers, plumbers, Americans who keep our streets safe and clean, who prepare our food, who clean up after us, who care for our aging parents.

And so, in today's economy, we should be making it easier, not harder, for folks to join a union. We should be strengthening our labor laws, not rolling them back. And for contractors or workers who can't join unions, we

should be finding new avenues for them to join together and advocate for themselves as well.

There's a saying that I think Lee Saunders—where is Lee? He's in here somewhere. I—there he is, right next to Rich over there. He likes to quote this: "If you're not at the table, you're on the menu." [*Laughter*] So we've got to get more working Americans to the table. But in order to do that, we have to acknowledge that you can't just keep on doing the same things thinking you're going to get a different outcome.

So part of the goal of this summit is to think creatively about how do we have a growing movement around the country to empower workers, to give them a sense of possibility. And we're seeing some of that happening here, some of the people who are representing here. Workers are organizing online at sites like coworker.org to fight for new protections. Fast-food workers like Terrance are organizing for a raise with the support of the labor movement, and they've scored major victories in New York and L.A. We've got the National Domestic Workers Alliance—an organization of caregivers and housekeepers and nannies—who teamed up with care.com to make sure these workers got the support that they deserve. It's called the "Fair Care Pledge," and employers who take the pledge voluntarily agree to pay a fairer wage and set a clear example and provide for paid time off.

So we've got to look for new tools to bring people together, because in today's economy, it's not always going to be a situation where you just have one plant and one worker and one organizing drive; it's going to be workers who are not always on a single site. And we've got to find ways to make sure that they can express their solidarity in new ways. And that's where technology actually can help in the same ways that in the past sometimes it's hindered.

And then we need to engage businesses to lead the way as well, because there are businesses out there who are taking the high road and enlist their employees as partners in their shared future and understand that if they're investing in their employees and making them partners, that they'll actually do better, not worse. They'll do better for shareholders. They'll do better for the community. They'll do better for America.

So you've got New Belgium Brewing that opens up its books and its strategic decision-making process to employees, and they also make really good beer. [*Laughter*] Kaiser Permanente works with 28 different unions to provide good pay and benefits, but also educational programs and avenues for employees to help improve quality and care throughout the company, which is why they're considered one of the premier health organizations in the country. Cumberland Farms convenience stores connects employees and leadership through apps and online platforms, and that leads to more input from employees and higher retention rates and better service.

So there are good things happening in America. But the question is: How do we scale up? How do we draw best practices and start changing mindsets? How do we help working folks and their families get ahead?

So we're here today to think about where do we go next. We've got to ask ourselves: What does the next generation of American jobs look like? How do we make sure those jobs reward hard work? At a time of shrinking union membership, but a growing number of digital tools for organizing, how do we make sure everyone who works hard has a chance to get ahead?

And how do we change public attitudes so that people who are frustrated feel empowered and not isolated? I think this is very important. We're entering into political season, and I won't make a big commentary on all of that. Obviously, I'm a proud Democrat—[*laughter*]—and I think we have better answers on a lot of these questions. But I will say this. The fear, the apprehension that can express itself in all kinds of ways—anti-immigration sentiment, resentment towards people who don't look exactly like you do, some of the anger that can express itself in not very productive economic policies—a lot of that is fed by just people feeling anxious about their futures and feeling alone and feeling like they've got no control and that nobody is listening.

And so part of what we've got to do is be—to tap into people who are frustrated about their job paying so little, people who are frustrated about industries that used to be in their town leaving, rightly frustrated about how hard it is to save for retirement, rightly frustrated about the fact that they can be replaced at any time with very little protections, and make sure that they understand there's a positive way to deal with these issues that will actually produce and deliver change and make things better, not just for them, but for all workers. We've got to help people feel connected and not isolated and hopeful, not just fearful.

And that requires that we do some self-examination about how we approach these problems. And I'll be honest with you, I mean, I've had conversations with our union leadership about this: You've got a whole millennial generation who knows they're not getting a good deal in the workplace, but don't consider joining unions, in part because the laws have been set up to make so hard to unionize, but also in part because they don't live in a town where everybody is working in the same plant, and there's a tradition of going to the assembly hall, and they haven't seen their parents or grandparents for generations participating in joining in same ways. And they connect, but they connect in different ways. And we've got to adapt to that: try to find new ways of bringing people in.

So that's why you're all here today to come up with some answers. I've got ideas, but this is a hard problem, and it's going to require creativity and effort from all of us. And we've got leaders from labor, business, and government; we've got some of the brightest minds in organizing and economics; and we've got folks like Terrance and his mom Joann, some of the hardest working Americans in the country. So you are in charge for the day. I'm eager to hear your ideas and your solutions. I know there are going to be some breakout sessions.

I'm going to come back and have a town hall and hopefully be able to hear some of the discussion that's been taking place. But I do want to start the discussion by just offering a set of common, set principles—commonsense principles for what it means to work in America.

First, if you work hard in America, you should earn enough money to support your family. And if you're working two jobs, like Terrance, then your family should never have to go to bed hungry.

Second, if you work hard in America, you should earn decent benefits. And that means access to the two bedrock sources of lifelong security, and that is affordable health coverage and retirement savings.

Third, if you work hard in America, you should have the right to a safe workplace. And if you get hurt on the job or become disabled or unemployed, you should still be able to keep food on the table.

Fourth, if you work hard in America, you should be able to take care of those you love, which means having sick leave and parental leave and affordable childcare and predictable schedules that give your family some stability.

Fifth, if you work hard in America, you should have a pathway to the education and training you need to grow your skills and earn raises and promotions and the chance to get ahead.

And finally, if you work hard in America, you should have the freedom to decide for yourself—without fear or interference—if you want to join with others to advocate for yourself in the workplace, whether that's through a union or any other means. And these are core principles that helped build this country.

So I—I'm sure there are going to be a lot of ideas coming out of these discussions, but these are the guideposts that we need to stay focused on: good pay, benefits, workplace safety, work-family balance, skills training, the freedom to organize. That's what unions secured for us. That's what we have to secure for the next generation of workers.

We've done a lot of work on these issues: extending overtime protections, helping workers collect fair pay that they've earned, ensuring paid sick leave for Federal contractors. Seventeen States and 30 cities and counties so far have answered my call to raise the minimum wage.

There are few policies that have done more to provide Americans with financial security

than Obamacare. Because insurance plans on the new Federal marketplace are affordable and portable, folks now have the power and peace of mind to switch jobs or start a new business or make a living in the on-demand economy without worrying about whether they're going to get sick.

So we're going to continue to do everything in our power to help working families get ahead. And we're going to still have to worry about short-term politics even as we try to shift long-term perspectives here. Congress has to do its job right now and pass a budget that strengthens protections for America's workers and invests in the education and job training that prepares our workforce for the future. And they need to strengthen paid leave and expanded childcare and raise the minimum wage for Americans across this country. They should pass the WAGE Act, a bill that cracks down on employers who violate labor laws and that makes it easier for workers to organize.

And—but—and I'll end on this point. You can't wait for Congress. [*Laughter*] I'm just—no, no, I'm just saying. The—we've got incredible champions like Nancy Pelosi and the Members of Congress who are here, but this is a fight on the ground. We've got to change an attitude and mindset that says there's nothing we can do, or giving workers more voice means inefficiency and we won't be competitive, or suggests that there's a contradiction between economic growth and decent wages, or suggests that we should have a race to the bottom with other countries, or suggests that somehow the current arrangements in which a growing amount of what we produce in this country going to the top .001 percent is in the natural order of things and is somehow fair and just.

And we—those are attitudes that we have to change. And that's going to happen on the ground. And that will then reflect itself in politics, and that will reflect itself in new laws being passed.

But we've got to give people examples and models and work where we can to make a difference where we can. And that will give people confidence and hope and can start triggering the kind of broader movement that channels people's anxieties and frustrations in ways that are good for our future.

So I want to hear from you about the challenges you're facing right now, the successes you've earned, the ideas you have to strengthen workers' voices across the country. I will come back later this afternoon. I don't expect you to come up with all the answers today—[*laughter*]—but I do want to make sure, we're asking the right questions and that we produce a set of relationships and workstreams to really get this going.

If we do that, then we're going to be able to keep America a place where, when you work hard, you can get ahead, and more importantly, you can see your kids and your grandkids get ahead.

All right? Thanks, everybody. I'll see you this afternoon. Thank you. See you guys there.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:47 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Kansas City, MO, resident Terrance Wise, who introduced the President, and his mother Joann Wise; and Lee Saunders, president, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

Remarks in a Question-and-Answer Session at the White House Summit on Worker Voice
October 7, 2015

Coworker.org Cofounder and Codirector Michelle Miller. Thank you, Mr. President. It's an honor to be here at the White House Summit for Worker Voice. And we're really excited to share with you what we've learned today from everybody.

The President. Well, first of all, I hope everybody has had a good time, and I hope the conversations have been useful. I know that my team that has participated has been incredibly excited and inspired by all the energy and insight and stories that people have told throughout the day.

So my goal is to learn from you. But I'm also happy to give you my perspective in terms of where we can take this. My hope is, at the end of this session, that we can agree to put together some sort of plans for follow-up. Because the goal here was not to end a conversation, the goal was to begin a conversation, widen it, broaden it, solicit additional ideas from folks who weren't able to participate here today, and then see whether, as a consequence of this ongoing collaboration, we start building a much bigger conversation across the country.

So, Michelle, why don't you kick us off?

On-Demand Economy

Ms. Miller. Sure. So I'll tell you a little about coworker.org. We're a platform where people can just join together to improve their working conditions and have a voice in their workplace. And we see worker voice not just as a voice to your boss, but also a voice to each other so people can communicate together to improve things.

And this week, we were a platform for a voice to you. So we got thousands of submissions from our community about what people were wrestling with around changing things in their workplaces and improving their conditions. And the number-one theme that we heard from folks was that their jobs are changing; the economy is at a moment of restructuring, and everybody from freelancers to restaurant workers to manufacturing workers are seeing these changes in the workplace. And they know that we have an opportunity to make those jobs awesome, but we're only going to do that if we have a voice in how they're shaped.

So I can bring up our first question. It is from Rochelle in Los Angeles. She is a gig coder, so she gets coding jobs from an online platform. And she represents a lot of the questions that we got from folks working in the emerging on-demand economy and then the digital economy. And she wants to know, how can America better support workers who are working in a digital space and face difficulties, such as a lack of in-person contact, a lack of support from online platforms themselves, and a lack of tools with which to improve their jobs?

The President. Well, it's a great question. And I think it's important to recognize that the on-demand economy or the share economy is still a fraction of the overall economy and the overwhelming majority of people still work for employers and go to offices and go to factories. And so we have to not get too distracted as if suddenly everything has been transformed.

But what is absolutely true is, there's this underlying trend where companies, because they have a lot of data that they can process, because of bottom-line pressures, because of the quarterly report shareholder pressures that they're under and interests in cost-cutting are, across the economy, juggling schedules, pay and benefit systems, promotion systems—all of which are really disruptive.

And so somebody in the digital space, or somebody in the online—or on-demand economy is really just one end of this broader spectrum of changes that is—are taking place across the board. And what that means is, number one, we have to make sure that workers across sectors understand that their fates are connected; that you can't think, okay, I'm a—I'm in a union in a factory with a traditional contract and pension, and so I don't have to worry about what's happening to that worker over there. Because the same problems they're dealing with eventually you may be dealing with. So that's point number one.

Point number two is that there are going to be certain benefits that traditionally we got through employers that we're going to have to make sure are available to people who are not in a traditional workplace or are not going to be working for 30 years at a single place.

And to some degree, the Affordable Care Act was designed to fill the gaps. Eighty-five percent of the people in the country get their health insurance through their employers. But if they lost their job, if they wanted to start a business, if they're young and they're entering into the on-demand economy, they had no place to go.

So some of our job here is to make sure that for somebody like Rochelle, she's got other

ways of accessing benefits that traditionally she was getting through the job. And that means that, whether it's at the Federal level or at the local level, thinking about how do we get paid leave, unemployment insurance, childcare help—how do we get some of these goods packaged so that—primarily they're—we're getting them through employers, and we continue to put pressure on employers through unions and through organizing to give a better deal to workers, but also, if people are falling through those cracks, how can we fill those cracks effectively. So that's point number two.

Point number three is, for us to—I understand that in some of the sessions, people pointed out that consumers have power. And typically, if you are in one of these digital spaces, a lot of those companies are pretty sensitive to PR and the barriers to entry are not that high. And if I have a choice between choosing a company that is providing me some sort of IT help, and they've got a reputation for being really good to the people who are working for them, and another company that has a reputation for being really bad to the people that are working for them, I'm going to choose the people who are doing the right thing.

So I think part of this is going to be making sure that we help link folks like Rochelle to the people in this room and to unions and others so that there is a workers' movement across the economy. Number two, figuring out where are there gaps in benefits and security that was traditionally provided through employers, and we can fill those gaps through national policy or State and local policy. And number three, enlisting consumers to help put pressure on companies to do the right thing by their workers.

And all that requires organizing, and that is always an important piece of business in whatever it is that we're going to be trying to accomplish.

Ms. Miller. Yes. Absolutely. And I know that folks in the room also have some stories about organizing around lifting up workers in these economies. I—earlier today Ai-jen was speaking on a panel and talked about the "Good Work Code" that just got launched yesterday. And I wonder if you'd like to share that with us.

National Domestic Workers Alliance Director Ai-jen Poo. Sure.

Domestic Workers

The President. We've got a mike? We want to be able to hear you. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Poo. Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity. At the National Domestic Workers Alliance, we represent nannies, caregivers, and housekeepers around the country. And as we started to talk to more workers in the on-demand economy, we realize that they face many of the same challenges: lack of stability, lack of predictability of hours and of work and of access to a safety net. And so we worked with a lot of those workers and our members to develop what we call the "Good Work Code," which is a set of eight simple values for how to make the on-demand economy a really good place for the people who are working there.

And we want to work together with companies and the workers and all of the people in the workers' movement to actually move towards those shared values, because we think that there's a lot of promise that the on-demand economy can hold if we actually make sure that it's a great place for the people who work there. So the "Good Work Code."

And I would also say to Rochelle that I hope she joins in our organization, because we need people to be organized and build this movement. Join a union or an organization.

The President. Can I ask a follow-up question? And that is, the "Good Work Code" that you develop—obviously, that only works if you've got a couple of key industry leaders who sign up and then you've got customers who are willing to put some pressure on others in the space and in the industry. And give me a sense of how that worked initially with nannies and daycare workers and so forth, and how—what were some of the biggest barriers to getting started and getting moving on that?

Ms. Poo. Well, one, we really needed to tap into networks and get the word out that we were organizing. And now, technology actually enables—like through organizations like coworker.org—there's a real, enormous opportunity to scale our ability to get the word out.

And with employers, what we found was, a lot of employers wanted to do the right thing, and it just wasn't clear what that was. There were no standards, no guidelines. Many parts of the economy are like a Wild West, where there really isn't—there aren't clear standards and guidelines.

And so one of the things we all need to do is actually promote good standards, really be clear about what those are—which is part of what the "Good Work Code" is about—and then spread the word among our networks, leverage platforms like this one to talk about opportunities to work together and come together to move forward.

In the work with domestic workers, we actually found a lot of employers did support—their caregivers and their nannies are part of the backbone of how their households function every day. It's the work that makes all other work possible. And we also found that legislators taking action, passing a Domestic Worker Bill of Rights, and really supporting legislation that makes clear what the standards are and should be, that this is real work that deserves dignity like all work, right, that that sent a really important message to everyone, employers, families, and workers alike.

So I think it's an all-hands-on-deck situation where we need consumers, we need families, we need legislators to take action, to set standards. We need all of us to help enforce those standards and really carry out the kind of culture change that will support worker voice in the 21st century.

Labor Unions

The President. Well, I am persuaded. [*Laughter*] So the—so you're doing great work.

I—Michelle, I hope you don't mind, I'm going to hijack the format here just for a second, because I want to have a follow-up that I think is particularly relevant to this group, and this is an undercurrent, as we were organizing this.

I am a big believer, as you heard me say at the opening, of collective bargaining and unions as a tool to empower workers. And I think that the work that you just described in terms of good conduct is something that is profoundly needed. But then, I'm interested in how do we prevent that from being a watered-down version of the protections and rights that a union provides?

And so, since Mary Kay is sitting right here—[*laughter*]—and SEIU not only organizes similar cohorts, but also has been really supportive of creative partnerships, even with folks who are nonunion, I thought it would be a great time for maybe Mary Kay just to talk about how we should think about supporting traditional union efforts and strengthening laws where we can, and at the same time, reaching into these new areas where, for whatever reason—because of geography, because of industry—we may not right away be able to get a collective bargaining unit, but we don't want those folks to feel as if they're not being served at all and nobody is hearing them.

So why don't you tell us about that.

Service Employees International Union President Mary Kay Henry. Thank you so much, Mr. President. If I—the Terrance Wise story that you told and that Terrence told this morning is the first thought I have as you pose the question, which is, the way fast-food workers work is for a franchise owner that—where the decisions are made at the corporate level. And in our country, the current labor law doesn't promote the ability to think in the way that Terrence has done, which is, 4 million fast-food workers have the same conditions. He considers himself a global movement leader. And can we imagine the principles that you outlined—work that you can raise a family on, retirement security, and health benefits that you can count on; the ability to form a union without retaliation—Terrence has been fired, returned to work. He experiences retaliation every day for standing up.

But could we imagine with the employers in this room—that was a question I wanted to pose—when you think about the incredible employer work, imagine if the 10 percent of the employers who had—respect those guidelines were able to make an appeal to employers across the economy, because 4 million fast-food workers being able to have a national agreement with the multinational corporations

in the U.S. like they do in countries around the globe—which is outside of our current system—but these workers are creating through their guts and fearlessness and courage, and you're helping to frame by these principles, as a standard that 64 million workers across the service and care sector should be able to expect.

Just like Lou Berry, who is a UPMC worker in Pittsburgh, trying to form a union for 4 years, I believe has been fired twice, returned by the NLRB to his job because of retaliation, and because you help appoint people to the NLRB and helped change the rules. But still his employer won't behave like Kaiser Permanente, who's decided that workers having a voice can actually reduce cost of health care and improve quality for patients.

So I think you're right that we have to think about, how do we make the law that can work for hospital workers who formed unions, but how do we invent through the support of workers, and then calling—getting good employers in this room to call on the rest of the employers to respect work?

And there's two other people—Pavone Scott said to me as we left today, she goes: "I'm a childcare provider in Florida. There's 2 million of us. I've got to figure out how to create an employer, because I'm subsidized, for my children, through the State. There isn't really a direct employer relationship—2 million women work like that. She cares deeply about the children she serves, but no paid time off, no vacation, no sick leave, no Social Security. There's just what Ai-jen was talking about, like how do we think about who she cares for and loves but apply your principles in a way that she could imagine for the tens of thousands of women that do that work in Florida. But really what you want—you've told me, Pavone—is 2 million women who care for children ought to be respected as much as people that build and make things in this country. And that's what we'd like to pose today.

And I just want to say that it's—I think Secretary Perez told us we will be inspired and challenged. And I've been really provoked by the collection, the cross-section of us, and that we can imagine how 4 million people could have a collective agreement in fast-food, 2 million women in childcare. But we have to think on a scale that you've challenged us to consider. And I'm grateful to be here. Thank you.

The President. All right.

Labor Unions/Restaurant Workers/Minimum Wage

Ms. Miller. So this leads us actually really nicely into our next question, which is from a campaign creator on our own site. Alia, she works in North Carolina. She's a restaurant worker. And on her own, she's brought business owners, local electeds, customers, and workers to the table to raise standards in North Carolina—in Asheville, North Carolina, for restaurant workers and to get local businesses to agree to be committed to actually brand restaurants and other places as, this is a great place to work, so it should be a great place to buy.

And she asks, how—what more can be done at a Federal level to help people like her raise standards in her industry?

The President. Well, you know what's interesting is that—and this all connects with what's been said previously. Traditionally, there were two tools for workers to have a voice. One was employers need good employees, and particularly if you had a tight labor market, then employers felt compelled to hire good people and try to keep good people. And that continues to be important.

But the other was, unions were there to make sure that not only at the workplace, and wages and health benefits, that there were some direct negotiations and the workers were at the table in thinking about what was fair for them and that they weren't treated arbitrarily, but also, they provided enormous muscle and lift for us to then get Federal, State, and local legislation passed.

And—but there have always been gaps. And I think the restaurant industry is an example where a lot of Federal law did not reach into restaurants the way they should, which is why, for example, waiters and waitresses and how tips were treated was oftentimes substandard.

And it's not likely—I'm going to be honest—that during the remainder of my Presidency Congress passes laws to raise standards—[*laughter*]—among—for restaurant workers. So I think the work that Alia is doing—Asheville, by the way, is a great town, so those of you who have not been there—and great restaurants. But the kind of work that Alia is doing and some of you describe of creating new norms and social pressures at the local level with employers and with customers is a really powerful tool.

And I emphasize the customer side of this because I think most of us are price sensitive and we're not looking to overpay. On the other hand, I'll bet a lot of folks here, if they go to a restaurant and they know that the people working there are making a living wage, the fact that they might be paying an extra dollar for a burger would feel okay. Not—some people might not be able to afford it, but a lot of people could. It's just you're not thinking about it. And when you make people conscious that there's a connection between how employers [employees]* are treated and the purchases you're making, I think that can have an impact.

I think at the Federal level, the minimum wage law is hugely important for restaurant workers. And since we're not, so far, getting traction at the Federal level, the 30 cities and counties that are raising the minimum wage—and making sure that that minimum wage includes the tip provisions that have been introduced in the legislation that is stalled right now in Congress is really important—that's one of the most important immediate things that we can do to support folks in the restaurant industry, but also in large chunks of the service industry, generally.

And the last point I want to make, which Alia alludes to, in the same way that a lot of us as customers aren't always thinking about workers, but we're just thinking about what we're buying and the service we're getting, and we don't make that connection, there are a lot of employers who are actually really good people—particularly small businesses—but they're operating on tight margins, and they're under pressure. And part of our goal has to be to work with companies and employers, starting with the folks who are industry leaders oftentimes because they're—oftentimes the most profitable—and to highlight the way that if you have good management, you can actually do right by your employees and still outperform and outcompete others.

And we always use as an example Costco, which the starting salary the last time I checked—and the last time I was in a Costco was, what, a year and a half ago, maybe 2 years ago—but the starting salary for a cashier was, like, $11.50 or something. And there were tracks whereby somebody who started at the cash register was suddenly the manager of one of the sections of the store. They all had health benefits throughout. They were union friendly. And if you look at their stock, they've performed as well as some of their biggest competitors or better.

So what does that tell us? What it tells us is that this idea that in order for you to do good as a company you've got to squeeze your workers as hard as possible is a fallacy. But part of the problem in this conversation, and part of the reason we thought it was important to invite some of these employers with best practices, is that so often in the debate, this gets framed as a business-versus-labor thing, as opposed to business and labor who are doing the right thing versus business that are trapped in a bad relationship with their workers and are relying on outdated models of rapid turnover and low wages and no benefits. And the more we can shift to shine a spotlight on those good practices and those effective companies and to help those companies then work with other companies across industries—and that's where I think this good conduct and good employer standards comes in—that can make a really powerful difference over the long term.

And it sounds like Alia is doing that in her local level, and that's something that I think we all have to learn from.

* White House correction.

Ms. Miller. Yes. Lola Smallwood Cuevas, from the Black Worker Justice Center, told a great story today about the ways in which they've been able to raise standards in Los Angeles. And I'd love for her to share that story, both with Alia, who is listening, and with you. She's right back there.

The President. Where's Lola? There you go.

Infrastructure/Underemployment

Los Angeles Black Worker Center Director Lola Smallwood Cuevas. Thank you, and thank you for the opportunity and for convening this amazing and inspiring day. In L.A., what we're doing is community unionism. Black workers who are in horrific crisis are partnering with unions, we're partnering with other worker centers, community-based organizations to make a difference and to create pathways.

And we've had some success, thanks to the administration's special rule that helps us to have targeted hiring in our city and to make that an opportunity for workers who want to get into good construction careers. We're excited about the pilot, which is going to create even more opportunities for workers to get access to jobs, and we are hoping to see changes that will allow now for us to begin to really do—to modernize industry culture so that we can ensure that African American workers and women have an opportunity to make construction a career that can support them, their families, and communities.

We're doing that at a very small scale in Los Angeles, but the most—simplest—what we see as a simple rule update would go a long way to making a difference in the lives of workers. And so, as we're building this untraditional—new, sort of untraditional model of organizing and unionization in our communities. We'd love to see more support around how do we create new industries that are open to all and create more equitable workforce.

The President. Well, I think we're very proud of what Lola said. I—look, something Lola said that I suspect the economists in the room will heartily agree with, and that is that—remember what I said in terms of leverage with workers at the outset. One of the best pieces of leverage is a tight labor market. So I don't want to ignore the fact that smart policies that, for example, finance the $2 trillion worth of infrastructure repair that we need in this country would be a really powerful tool to give workers more of a voice, because now you've got a whole bunch of folks who are engaged in jobs that can't be exported.

Those transportation or public works projects that are taking place in your community, Lola, now provide a platform for apprenticeship programs and a pipeline for bringing in the unemployed into the job market. It makes it a lot easier for us to have discussions about fair pay and fairer wages and reduced turnover and sick leave.

So this conversation does not replace the need for us to have economic policies that are going to help grow the economy faster and put more people to work. And there's more that we can do.

I'm very proud—we came in at 10-percent unemployment, and we're down to 5.1. But what we also know is people are underemployed; people are fearful of job change. And typically, that's how you get a raise, is oftentimes going to a new job or at least having the option of going to a new job, so your employer says, hold on a second—[*laughter*]—what do you need to stay? And so there is still slack in the economy, and we could be doing more. Congress could be doing more in order to alleviate some of that.

But that's not the primary focus of our conversation. I just wanted to make sure we didn't lose that thread, because I don't want us to let our policymakers off the hook in terms of encouraging policies that will have businesses grow faster.

Part of the reason, when I talk to employers—and some of these are really big, successful employers—is they say, you know what, if the economy is only growing at 2 percent, 2½ percent per year, I can make a profit without ever hiring additional people. And if I start seeing some growing demand, I've probably saved enough, I've got enough money in the bank that I can automate it a little bit more and it's easier for me to control my costs.

So there's a big difference between, let's say, 2-percent growth and 3- or 3½-percent growth. And we could achieve 3- and 3½-percent growth even in this new economy if we weren't doing some counterproductive things, some of which are compounded by even more counterproductive things being proposed in some of these Presidential debates, but that's whole other piece of business. [*Laughter*] This is not a political event.

Temporary Employees

Ms. Miller. So you'll be glad to know that you and Jon from Lima, Ohio, have a lot in common. He also is very concerned about the growing use of perma-temps and would likely agree with you that he hates that word, like you said this morning. So he has been watching people he knows working at companies for up to 6 years as temporary workers, and he wants to know, frankly, is there anything that can be done at all?

The President. I think there is. But this is an area where we're probably going to need some changes in law in order to provide more levers to get companies who are not doing the right thing to do the right thing. And some of you probably heard Tom Perez talk about some of these issues earlier, maybe in some of the workshops, but the broader audience that may be watching at this point, since I assume this is being live-streamed somewhere, may want to hear it. So why don't we give Tom the mike, because he has been spending a lot of time thinking about this at Department of Labor.

There are a lot of issues around classification, overtime, temporary workers, independent contractors versus actual employees. And there are a lot of games being played to get around both collective bargaining, but also to get around overtime pay, getting around paying basic benefits. And that means we're going to have to, in some cases, redefine what we think of as employees. And that's going to be a tough lift, but—Tom.

Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez. Sure. Thank you, Mr. President. The first thing that comes to mind is a conversation we had this morning. We heard from Robert who is a perma-temp at—Robert, you still here? Oh, here he is, right here.

The President. There's Robert.

Secretary Perez. And then, we talked about the issue of culture: What kind of culture do you want to have in your workplace? And we heard from Kaiser. We heard from Market Basket. You talk to New Belgium Brewery, you talk to Container Store, you talk to that Kartsotis guy from Shinola, and you see they've created——

The President. Really good watches, by the way.

Secretary Perez. Yes, absolutely. And bicycles.

The President. Yes

Secretary Perez. And you see the culture they've created. It's a culture in which they understand that their most precious resource is their human capital. And I asked I think—it was Joe from Market Basket—how could you have a situation, Joe, where you had two Market Basket employees, both there for 6 years, and one was a temporary employee making a fraction of what the other person was making. And he said that's totally inconsistent with our culture. It wouldn't happen, I think were your exact words, Joe. And we heard that from so many other people.

So step number one, and it gets back to some of what Ai-jen was saying, is when we have this code of conduct, perma-temps are inconsistent with inclusive capitalism. And so I think we should start with that.

What we also have in terms of regulatory tools, as you referenced, and as Senator Obama, he was focused on this issue because what we have seen, regrettably, with some degree of frequency over recent years, is that employers at times will misclassify someone. Someone who acts like an employee is—should be an employee and they're called an independent contractor. When I was in Maryland working on this issue—it's called misclassification here in Washington. I don't like that word because that sounds like you put it in the wrong file. We called it in Maryland what I thought it was, which was workplace fraud, and where I grew up, it was called cheating. [*Laughter*]

And the victims of cheating are the employee who is called an independent contractor when he or she should be a worker. The victims are employers who play by the rules. And the most—one of the most frequent sets of complainants in our cases are employers: I'm paying my workers, I'm paying their worker's comp, I'm treating them like an employee, and I'm trying to bid on contracts, I can't get—I keep getting low-balled by that company who is paying everyone cash under the table. So you've got employer victims. And then, the tax collector is a victim.

And we hear a lot in the worker's comp context about worker's comp programs are starting to have trouble with their fiscal stability and it's because they've got a denominator problem. There's not enough people paying into the system. And that's because there's cheating going on. And so we spend a lot of time on this issue.

There's an appropriate place for independent contractors, there absolutely is, but we have seen with all too much frequency dishwashers called independent contractors; drywallers were employees on a Friday, and then they're independent contractors on a Monday. We see it across sectors.

And so these are some of the issues—and we have a pretty robust practice. And then-Senator Obama had a bill that dealt with this at a Federal level, and we do a lot of work at a State level because it's about leveling the playing field. And so, many people feel frustrated, and they don't want to speak up because—and I heard this last night, Mr. President, when we met with six or seven workers. The most frequent thing I heard is, I know I can do better, but I'm scared to come forward. That's why Robert today is a pretty heroic figure for being here, because they're scared. And Jon in Lima is seeing this firsthand, and we see it. We've got a pretty robust practice in this.

The President. Good.

Communication Between Employees and Employers

Ms. Miller. So, speaking of employer culture, I wanted to bring up the next question that we got from a young worker in Atlanta, Georgia, named Kristie, who organized thousands of her coworkers mostly using social media. And young workers are—they're used to being able to talk about everything online and to having an open conversation about what's happening in their workplaces and in their lives and in their families. And she wants to know, how do we encourage employers to embrace worker voice? Because as we know, this new generation of workers are going to be speaking out more, using all of the platforms at their disposal, and she wants to make sure that they're able to do so without fear of retaliation.

The President. Well, look, every employer is going to have some sensitivities about the people who are working for them grumbling. I mean, that's just the nature of things, because they're worrying about their bottom lines and they're worrying about competitive pressures and they're trying to keep everything together. And there's a natural defensiveness, I think, that we all have. When I try to tell my daughters to do something—and they're not my employees, clearly—[*laughter*]—they, kind of, what are you talking about? But what you discover—as I said earlier—is, is that the best employers, the most effective employers are the ones who are actively soliciting worker input.

And when you create a culture in which the worker knows that their opinions are valued, that in turn means that they're more invested in the success of the company and seeing their ideas moving forward. And this was, by the way, the principle at the heart of how the Japanese automakers cleaned Detroit's clock for a long time until—even though we invented this idea of continuous improvement, a lot of it had to do with listening to what folks on the ground were saying. Because if you were up in the boardroom, you didn't know what was going to make the assembly line work better, you weren't going to figure out how are we going to reduce our error rates. The folks who were going to figure it out were the folks who, every day, were sitting staring at this stuff and saying, you know what, this is a stupid way of doing things—[*laughter*]—and we should do it this way. Right?

So, already—and represented here are employers who understand that, and they're actively soliciting input. The question, though, is when it comes to some more sensitive areas like wages, are employers, even good employers, as open? And I think that this is where the culture issue that Tom raised is important. And this is where consumer pressure is important. To the extent that employers recognize they'll have better employees by listening to employees, and the employees feel safe enough to then say, you know what, we're having problems because what you're paying us right now doesn't pay the rent and we know that a bunch of us are having to moonlight and we're dog tired when we come to work and if you gave us a little bit of paid sick leave, you'll get it back because people will feel so much more loyal to you—if they're open to hearing that, then—or if it's a safe space for them to be able to say that, then those companies will find ways of doing it and, in fact, ultimately be even more profitable.

But that's why it's important for us to lift up those companies that are doing exactly that. Look at best practices. And I'd be interested, maybe some of the companies who are here might have a comment on how they built that culture.

And we've got Kaiser Permanente represented, we've got Shinola represented, some great employers here. Anybody here, of the employers, want to talk about what allowed you to make that cultural shift? And here's the other question, though: Be honest about why even employers of good will might be hesitant to provide more voice to workers, and what are the ways in which we can break down some of those barriers and make employers less defensive or less worried about it.

Anybody? Tom, you want to try it out? Yes. Go ahead.

Shinola Founder Tom Kartsotis. So I think what you're saying about consumers having a lot of power is really important. And I think in today's world, brands are really being born on the inside. So I have an example of when it really hit me. First of all, what we were trying to do, first of all, is a philanthropic thing. We were going to create a company that had a hundred employees. We were going to make watches for other watch companies like Tiffany and Movado. And we had to make some watches to show our customers what we could make. And so we made 2,500 watches that we were going to ship in 3 or 4 months. And we were asking customers to pay $550 in advance for a watch that we were barely sure we could make. Nobody had ever touched it before. And we had a picture of our workers as our marketing. And the demand came through the roof.

And it hit me at that moment that people are responding to what's going on inside the companies. People want to know where their food is being made. People want to know who is making their products. And that's really what we're focused on is making them happy. So, if people come to our factory and they see people making double minimum wage, and giving people hugs instead of other things that are going on, I think that it comes through in the product. And that's what we're trying to do.

The President. Good. The—anybody else? Kaiser?

Kaiser Permanente Executive Vice President Gregory A. Adams. Again, thank you for this great day. It's been great to participate. I feel really fortunate. As I said earlier, Kaiser has been on a long journey in terms of our labor-management partnership. And there are several things. One it's really hard work. So no one should assume that it's easy.

And part of the work has been to really educate and train our leaders and managers differently so that they understand that being able to engage and to share power, to share decision-making doesn't make them less in terms of leadership. It's also been a process of where we've had to really work with and educate our union partners. And we do that together, because they come to the table differently, because we come owning what is it that we're trying to solve, what is the organization's interest, what is labor's interest, and how do we own this and how do we work it through?

The other thing I would say is that I think in terms of people who haven't walked this path or haven't been there, I mean, there is this

sense of giving up power. There is this element of fear. I mentioned earlier that as we bring new leaders into the organization, sometimes, they struggle with what does it mean to kind of engage with a unit-based team? What does it mean to let the team own and do this work?

One of my colleagues here—an LVN from Colorado—is actually with us. I—one of the unit-based teams in Colorado that has been working on postacute discharge actually reduced the discharge—or the return admission rate for our Medicare patients by 50 percent and saved, like, $6 million. And they did that because the physicians, the staff came together, they identified the indicators that were causing patients to come back into the hospital. They developed the tool. They focused the homecare—the visits on those indicators and actually improved care, improved service, and made us more affordable.

So we—our experience has been that while it's hard work—because we have to be focused on interests, we have to listen—we also have to free up people's ability to share with us. Because, I mean, culturally, when you're the CEO or you've got different roles, I mean, people have to become comfortable engaging with you as an equal. So we have to allow people to be present to us and be present to—with them.

Workplace Culture

The President. Well, I think that's a great point. And on the other side—because you mentioned unions had to change some of their attitudes and thinking as well—one of the virtuous cycles that you want to get into is a situation where the workers feel valued and listened to, which means that when a company has a problem, a challenge, a change that has to be made, now because the workers remember, yes, I've got paid sick leave, and, yes, the employers always treated me fairly, so I'm going to come in with a mindset of how do we solve this problem, as opposed to, no to whatever changes.

And that, I think, is a lot of times what some businesses may fear, not that they're trying to hurt workers, but they may not have flexibility to respond to a changing marketplace.

And one of my favorite stories—and I talked about this in Osawatomie when I made a speech about economic fairness and inequality—was a story of a company that, during the depths of the recession in 2008, 2009, 2010—and I forget what kind of—it was a manufacturer, but it was a family-owned company, and because they felt that their workers were family, and because they felt that there was a community behind them, they said, we won't take a salary until we get us out of this hole. The workers then said, rather than lay off a bunch of people, we'll all engage in a workshare and reduce pro rata how much we're taking in, but that way, nobody is bearing the full burden of this thing.

And in a couple of years, they had come out of it stronger than ever. But the point was that they had already established this culture. And it wasn't just the employers, it was also the employees. But the employees had to see that the employer was setting an example of caring about them.

And I do think that—as President, I meet with a lot of CEOs. And a lot of them are really smart people, and they're producing really good things and highly philanthropic. But part of the reason issues of CEO compensation are sensitive to folks is not because workers are jealous and they want "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous," it's the sense that if in fact there are greater competitive pressures out there, how much is everybody willing to give up to meet those competitive pressures as opposed to putting it all on the backs of workers. And that, I think, is—that's a mindset that has to change.

And that also, by the way, is fed by, in public companies, this quarterly-report mentality, which is challenging to change. Because that's—our economy is designed right now—bonuses, incentives, whether a CEO keeps his job—so much of it is just based on short-term profits, and it makes it much more difficult. The company I just described was not a public company, so they could make a decision without a bunch of shareholder pressure.

And one of the things I've been wrestling with and talking to our teams about is, are there ways to nudge the economy in a direction where companies can make longer-term investments, invest in their workers, understanding that it may not pay off this quarter, but we're going to be a stronger company 5 years down the road or 10 years down the road?

But this is really deeply embedded right now in how our economy—how so many of our public companies think, even when a lot of the CEOs will express privately that they'd like to be thinking more long term.

Ms. Miller. Well, so it seems like we only have time for one more question.

The President. We'll take two.

Small Businesses/Freelance Employees

Ms. Miller. All right, fair enough. So the next question came to us from Sunday, a freelancer in New York. And she reflected a lot of the questions that we got not just from freelancers, but a lot of folks who were struggling with pay. And her particular question was the—about the fact that sometimes freelancers aren't even paid for their work, and there are no mechanisms available to them right now to actually insist on being paid aside from Small Claims Court. And so her question is, what will you do to help both small-business owners and freelancers actually get paid for their work?

The President. This is a great question, and I don't have an immediate answer. When it comes to Federal contracts, one of the things that smart people like Jason Furman, my current Chair of the Council for Economic Advisers, and Gene Sperling, former head of our National Economic Council, thought of while we were still trying to find ways to boost business and aggregate demand—they figured out, you know what, a bunch of our small businesses who are subcontractors or down the supply chain to the Federal Government, they're not getting paid long enough—or fast enough.

And it doesn't matter when—well, I won't say it doesn't matter—but Boeing may be able to survive it taking a little bit longer to get paid, but some of their smaller suppliers cannot. And we actually changed how our payment systems worked to accelerate it, and it really helped a lot of small businesses. I mean, we loosened up a bunch of money into the economy. Those are the kinds of tricks you work on, particularly when Congress isn't passing the laws that you need for them to pass to boost the economy.

But I haven't actually spent a lot of time thinking about, are there best practices that we could institute? But what I do know is, the Federal Government, State governments, city governments, they're big employers, and they're big consumers—obviously, the Federal Government is the largest consumer in the world—and so setting up best practices for them then can encourage best practices to be adopted throughout a particular industry.

But, I don't know—Jason, anything else you want to add on that? Any other ideas that we've had? Because I'm sure this is something that has come up with SBA and others either—oh, wait, we've got a volunteer. Good.

Ms. Miller. Actually, Sara Horowitz has been leading the way——

The President. Good.

Ms. Miller. ——on these questions.

Freelancers Union Founder and Executive Director Sara Horowitz. Well, I like to say help is on the way.

The President. There you go.

Ms. Horowitz. So thank you so much and thank you, Mr. President, for this really exceptional time to really be breaking ground and thinking about the next frontier, and to the great Michelle Miller and Coworker for their great work.

So, in New York City right now, we have Freelancers Union—it's a national organization, 300,000 members of freelancers—who have not been misclassified—who really do the great work of the country and really contribute in so many ways. And one of their biggest challenges is that they don't get paid. The average freelancer has been stiffed $6,000 a year; 70 percent of all freelancers have experienced nonpayment at some point in their life. And that's why we are launching the freelance—"Freelancing Isn't Free" campaign. [*Laughter*] Which is——

[*At this point, Ms. Horowitz displayed a "Freelancing Isn't Free" poster.*]

The President. There you go.

Ms. Horowitz. Here we go.

The President. There you go, right there—"Freelancing Isn't Free."

Ms. Horowitz. And right now the New York City Council——

The President. I will say, though, next time you need a bigger poster. [*Laughter*] So that——

Ms. Miller. I surprised her. She didn't know.

The President. Because for those of us over 50, it becomes harder to read. Anyway, go ahead. [*Laughter*] I'm teasing.

Ms. Horowitz. And while the press is taking pictures, let me say that's the hashtag, because at the city council, we are now having legislation that will make it that you—a company has to hire a freelancer with a contract, and we are hoping that they will have double damages, attorneys' fees, so that freelancers can get paid.

The second problem is, freelancing now, as I think you were alluding to, is on a 30-, 60-, 90-day invoicing system. Imagine if you did work and you didn't get paid for 3 months. It's just really unconscionable, and some of the biggest companies are doing this. And so this is a national campaign joined by great unions like the teachers' union, 32BJ SEIU, the Domestic Workers, so many others to really say this getting paid is one of the most important things. So help is on the way——

The President. There you go.

Ms. Horowitz. ——as we like to say.

Ms. Miller. Thanks, Sarah.

The President. Okay. Good. One more?

Worker Co-ops

Ms. Miller. Yes, one more. So this is a short one. Michael from DC wants to know how the White House can help to raise awareness about worker co-ops as a source of good jobs, which I think—baked into the structure of worker co-ops is worker voice. So let me hear from you.

The President. We had someone applaud right here, and this is one of our great partners and pastors in working on a whole range of issues, so go ahead, please.

CASA Executive Director Gustavo Torres. Thank you very much, Mr. President. Yes. I think that is a very, very important——

The President. Introduce yourself, first of all, to everybody.

Mr. Torres. My name is Gustavo Torres from CASA. Thank you very much. This is a very, very important issue, and we believe that that is the way how we can bring voice to the workers because—not only voice, but also power. Because we believe that in addition to have the voice, they are going to be able to share the wealth. And that is the reason why it is so important that the White House and your administration really review that opportunity to be able to facilitate proceeds and make sure that the co-ops are treated like more businesses, because that is exactly what they are. So thank you very much.

The President. Good. The—well, look, worker co-ops, employee ownership—the more we get people invested in business models in a whole range of ways, the more we align workers' interests with the business interests, I think the stronger our economy is going to be. And it points to some of the ways in which we can make sure we've got broad-based growth.

Let me just wrap up, Michelle, by saying this—and I want to repeat what I said on the front end. The genesis of this meeting was conversations that I had with Rich Trumka and Mary Kay and some of the folks who were working in the new on-demand economy and our folks in house, and the belief that for all the successes that we've made in recovering the economy, if we don't solve this problem, then it will have an adverse effect on our long-term competitiveness and it will have an adverse effect on our democracy. Because America works when we are building a broad-based middle class and there are ladders of opportunity that everybody can reach. And historically, it doesn't work and not only does our economy, but our politics also turn in a bad direction when you start seeing huge separations between how folks at the top are doing and everybody else is doing.

And what I said to my team was, how can we foster a conversation to start getting more

creative? Because we've looked very narrowly at what can we get through Congress, what can the NLRB do, but we haven't come up with as many new models as we need to.

And I used as an example a single mom who is working in an office park somewhere who maybe has been misclassified or cheating—is getting cheated, knows that she doesn't have sick leave, doesn't have overtime pay, but frankly, feels isolated, doesn't have recourse immediately to a union someplace, isn't—doesn't have the time—because she's got to take care of her kids—doesn't have time to go to a town hall or a union meeting, but would be very interested if she thought that there was a way for her to join up with others in order to promote her interests. And so that was how this thing got started.

I—the reason I wanted to share that with you is to say that this is the beginning of a conversation that I want to push for the next 15 months, through the end of my Presidency. And the ideas that have been generated from these groups, we're going to try to collate, we will then distribute. And then I'll make sure that my team is working with the various organizations and individuals that are represented here to think about how do we then follow up in concrete ways around these issues, whether that means doing some regional summits or more localized summits to talk about very particular issues; whether it's identifying three or four ideas that have enough traction that we want to start pushing them real hard; whether it is attaching more publicity to a particular organizing drive that's taking place right now; or taking an idea that involves branding good practices and starting to lift that up more.

I don't know yet what you guys will determine are the best ideas, but we're going to be seeking your input. And that's how we're going to make sure to follow up.

I guess what I'm saying is, is that we provided the platform, but you own this thing. And so this is not one of those situations where you had a nice time, you took some pictures—[*laughter*]—and then, 6 months from now, you're all like, well, what did Obama do? That's not the deal here. [*Laughter*]

All right, the deal is I will work with you around the ideas that you identify. And we'll work together. And, hopefully, this will be the start of reversing some trends, both economic and cultural, that have been around way too long.

All right? Thank you, everybody. Good job.

Ms. Miller. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:55 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred Richard L. Trumka, president, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL–CIO). Ms. Henry referred to Kansas City, MO, resident Terrance Wise, who introduced the President for his earlier remarks to summit participants.

Statement on the Sinking of the *El Faro* Cargo Ship
October 7, 2015

The captain and crew of the *El Faro* were Americans and Poles, men and women, experienced mariners and young seamen. They were beloved sons and daughters and loving husbands and fathers. They were dedicated engineers, technicians, and a cook. And these 33 sailors were united by a bond that has linked our merchant mariners for more than two centuries: a love of the sea. As their ship battled the storm, they were no doubt working as they lived: together, as one crew. This tragedy also reminds us that most of the goods and products we rely on every day still move by sea. As Americans, our economic prosperity and quality of life depend upon men and women who serve aboard ships like the *El Faro.*

I thank everyone across our Government and in the private sector who worked so tirelessly, on the sea and in the air, day after day, in the massive search for survivors. The investigation now underway will have the full support of the U.S. Government, because the grieving

families of the *El Faro* deserve answers and because we have to do everything in our power to ensure the safety of our people, including those who work at sea. Today 28 American families—from Florida to Maine—and five Polish families are heartbroken. May they be comforted, in some small way, in knowing that they have the love and support of their neighbors, the merchant mariner community, and the American people. May God bless the men and women of the *El Faro.* May He comfort their families. And may He watch over and protect all those who serve at sea on behalf of us all.

Remarks at the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Annual Awards Gala
October 8, 2015

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back. *Buenas noches!* Well, it is good to be here. Thank you, Secretary Castro, not just for the introduction, but for the great work he is doing on behalf of the American people every single day. Thank you to your chair, Linda Sanchez, for her outstanding leadership in the Congress. Thank you to all of you for having me here tonight.

Audience member. Thank you!

The President. Thank you! I'd like to begin my remarks with a story.

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you too! [*Laughter*] But look, I've got to tell you this story here. So, on an evening about 75 years ago, in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles, a young man proposed to the woman of his dreams.

Any of us who've done that—and I have—[*laughter*]—know at that moment he was feeling pretty nervous. And fortunately for him, she said yes. And because apparently he was making the kind of money I was making when I proposed—[*laughter*]—to celebrate, they went to a hot dog stand. Things were simpler back then. But things took a wrong turn. Authorities suddenly pulled up, lined them up, patted them down, demanded to see their IDs, just because they were Mexican American. And when the young man handed over his wallet, the officer pulled the cards out of it and just dropped them on the sidewalk, and then he said, "Now you pick them up."

"I remember getting on my knees and picking them up," that young man said decades later. And we can imagine his fear and his humiliation. What had been a beautiful day had suddenly become an example of occurrences that were happening far too often. And imagine how easy it would have been for him at that moment to turn to despair and to allow the anger and the resentment to feed a cynicism and for him to decide that America could never change.

But that young man was named Ed Roybal. And Ed Roybal never lost faith in himself or in his country. And less than 25 years after he was brought to his knees on the streets of Los Angeles, Ed stood under the Capitol Dome to represent those very same streets in the Congress of the United States of America. He dedicated his life to the idea that America can change, that our Union can become more perfect. And today, his legacy lives on not only in the legislation he passed and the improvements he made in his district, but also in his daughter Lucille, who is here tonight. And he helped start the Congressional Hispanic Caucus because he knew that we are stronger together than we could ever be alone.

And that's the same reason I ran for this office 8 years ago, not because I believed in what I could do, but because I believed in what we could do together. The financial crisis hadn't even hit yet, and we came to understand it was going to make our job a lot harder. But thanks to the members of the Hispanic Caucus, thanks to people like Nancy Pelosi—who is standing here tonight—thanks to the determination and fundamental optimism of the American people, we have made progress.

When I took office, the unemployment rate was on its way to 10 percent. Today, it's 5.1 percent. The unemployment rate among Latinos hit 13 percent, and we've brought that down to 6.4 percent. When I took office, we

were losing about 800,000 jobs a month. Today, our businesses have created jobs for a record 67 months in a row, more than 13 million new jobs overall.

When I took office, more than 15 percent of Americans, including nearly one in three Hispanics, lacked health insurance. Today, we've covered another 17 million Americans, including 4 million Latinos, and only 9.2 percent of Americans are uninsured. For the first time on record, more than 90 percent of Americans have health insurance. For the first time ever, insurance companies can't discriminate against anybody with a preexisting condition.

When I took office, we were still too often stuck in a cold war mentality that began before many of us were even born. And today, for the sake of our people, and our entire hemisphere, we have reestablished relations with Cuba, we have turned the page on the failed policies of the past. We have strengthened our relationship with Latin America. We've put forward a plan to invest $1 billion in our shared security and prosperity in Central America.

When I took office, hard-working young people—Americans in every way but on paper—lived in constant fear of deportation. Today, more than 680,000 DREAMers live and study and work freely and openly in the country they've always called home. We've got smarter enforcement priorities, because it makes no sense to focus on separating families when we can be going after felons instead. We're taking new steps to reach out to folks who are eligible to become citizens and attract immigrant entrepreneurs and educate STEM students. We're going to help more husbands and wives of American citizens get their green cards without separating them from their families. And the deferred action policies I announced last year will help millions of mothers and fathers remain in the United States of America with their families, and although it is taking us longer than we hoped, I know we're on the right side of the law, and we are going to keep fighting to prove it.

And we haven't won every battle. We've still got a lot more work to do. But when the cynics told us we couldn't change our country for the better, they were wrong. There are more job openings today than at any time in our history. The high school dropout rate is near the lowest on record, and Latino students are making some of the fastest gains. More Americans are graduating from college. The deficits are down by two-thirds. The amount of foreign oil we buy is down. Teen pregnancy is down.

Which—all of which makes you wonder: Why are some of the folks who are running for my office so down on America? [*Laughter*]

Audience member. What about you?

The President. Well, no, I'm definitely not doing that. [*Laughter*] But by most measures, we are better off now than we were 7 years ago. And that we know. Of course, none of it comes up in their debates. I mean, they have invented this new reality where everything was terrific back in 2008—[*laughter*]—when the unemployment and uninsured rates were rising and DREAMers lived in fear of deportation and we were engaged in two wars and bin Laden was still at large. That was the golden era, apparently, the good old days. [*Laughter*] And then I came along and messed it all up. [*Laughter*]

And now when you listen to them, you still don't know what they're for except turning back the clock on the work that we've done together: repealing Obamacare, gutting Wall Street reform, allowing power plants to pollute the air our children breathe. And there is nowhere where they want to go further backwards than on immigration.

It wasn't that long ago that my predecessor, George W. Bush, a Republican—a conservative Republican from Texas, with whom I disagreed with on a whole lot of things, made immigration reform one of his core priorities. "We cannot build a unified country," he said, "by inciting people to anger or playing on anyone's fears or exploiting the issue of immigration for political gain." That's what he said.

Think how much better our economy would be if the rest of his party got the message. [*Laughter*] Think about how much better off our country would be if Republican politicians hadn't spent years precisely trying to scare voters with tales of immigrants flooding across our borders and taking our jobs and destroying

America as we know it, even though we know that when you look at what's happening at the borders, it's the lowest rates of immigration that we've seen since the 1970s. A clear majority of Americans, including a lot of Republican voters, support reform. That's one of the reasons we got a bipartisan bill through the Senate in 2013. But now some of the very same Republican politicians who championed reform in the past—some of whom sponsored these efforts—suddenly, they want nothing to do with it.

Audience members. Hmm!

The President. Hmm. [*Laughter*] In these circumstances, I always say, don't boo, vote.

They can't hear the boos, but they can hear your vote. But the point is, that's not leadership: turning against what's right the moment the politics of your base gets tough. Leadership is not fanning the flames of intolerance and then acting all surprised when a fire breaks out. Saying clearly inflammatory things and then saying, well, that's not what I meant—until you do it again and again and again. So we've got to decide whether or not we, as Americans, are willing to stand up against this kind of bigotry that—the same cruel impulse that Ed Roybal spent a lifetime fighting against.

The anti-immigrant sentiment that has infected our politics is not new, but it is wrong. It was directed at Irish folk. It was directed against Italians. There have been generations of immigrants that have been subject to this same kind of attitude, with some of the same stereotypes. It wasn't right then; it's not right now. And unless you were one of the First Americans—unless you're Navajo or Cherokee—somebody somewhere came from someplace else.

I believe we need an immigration system that is fair and orderly and lawful. I believe that people who come here illegally should have to pay a fine and pay their fair share of taxes and get registered and get right with the law and go to the back of the line before they earn citizenship. But when I hear folks talking as if somehow those kids are different from my kids, as if they're less worthy in the eyes of God, that somehow their families are less worthy of our respect and consideration and care, as if somehow back in the day, everybody had their papers in order when they came here, but now suddenly, nobody has their papers in order—I believe we're better than that.

If you want to be taken seriously as a leader, you can't just be against everything. You've got to be for something. You can't just feed on fear. You should be feeding hope. You should be for fixing our immigration system. You should be for allowing DREAMers and their parents, who have been here for years, to live without fear in the country they love. You should tell the truth, which is that illegal border crossings are lower than they've been in decades and that economists agree that immigration does not hurt our economy, it grows our economy, creating jobs, raising wages for Americans. You don't hear those facts very often, but those facts—those are facts.

And you've got to recognize that America's greatness does not come from building walls. Our greatness comes from building opportunity. Our greatness comes from building an economy that works for everybody. Our greatness comes from a dream that says in this country, if you work hard, you can build a better life for your family. No matter where you come from. No matter what you look like. No matter what your last name is. That's what makes America great.

So I'm going to spend every day that I have left in this office fighting to restore that dream so that everyone who works hard can get ahead. And, yes, that includes immigration reform. But that's not all that we've got to do. We've got to keep creating good jobs. We've got to make sure every family feels our country's recovery in their own lives, and that includes the families in Puerto Rico. We've got to make 2 years of college as free and universal as high school is today. We've got to stop spending billions of taxpayer dollars keeping nonviolent drug offenders behind bars and give them a chance to get right and back on the right track. We've got to make sure that every child gets a world-class education from an earliest age, that every person who's still uninsured gets covered, that every school and

every street is safe from the madness of gun violence.

And this change will not be easy because change never is. Change is never easy. It takes longer than 1 year. It takes longer than one term. It takes longer than the tenure of one President. But what we together have shown and proven is that when we stick together and put our shoulders to the wheel of history, not only is change possible, change is inevitable. America can change. And if we keep dreaming of something better and organizing for something better, if we keep voting for something better, together we're going to build on the progress we've made. We're going to create a brighter future for our children. *Si, se puede. Juntos podemos!*

Thank you, CHC—thank you, CHCI. *Que Dios los bendiga*. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:55 p.m. at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Families of the Victims of the Shooting at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon
October 9, 2015

I'm going to be very brief here. I just want to first of all say thank you to Mayor Rich. I want to thank Governor Brown. Most importantly, I want to thank the entire community and the entire State of Oregon for coming together at this terrible time to support the families.

I just had a chance to talk to them. Obviously, in moments like these, words aren't going to bring their loved ones back. But the one thing that they shared is how much they appreciate the entire UCC community coming together, how much they appreciate all their neighbors, all their friends, and people all across the country who have offered to help, sent their thoughts and their prayers.

What I just told the mayor is that if there's anything that we can do at the Federal level to help the community heal from this loss, obviously, we're going to be there. And I know that flying out here with some of the members of the Oregon delegation, they feel the same way. And the Governor, obviously, has been paying a lot of attention to how we can be most helpful to the families.

So—but there are going to be, I think, moments as we go forward where we're going to have to come together and figure out how do we stop things like this from happening. And I've got some very strong feelings about this, because when you talk to these families, you're reminded that this could be happening to your child or your mom or your dad or your relative or your friend. And so we're going to have to come together as a country to see how we can prevent these issues from taking place.

But today, it's about the families and their grief and the love we feel for them. And they surely do appreciate all the support that they've received.

Governor Kate Brown of Oregon. Thank you.

The President. Thank you.

Mayor Larry Rich of Roseburg, OR. Thanks very much. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Thank you again. No problem. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:41 p.m. at Roseburg High School. In his remarks, he referred to Sens. Ronald L. Wyden and Jeff Merkley; and Rep. Peter DeFazio. The related proclamation of October 2 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement Congratulating the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize Recipients
October 9, 2015

On behalf of the American people, I congratulate Tunisia's National Dialogue Quartet on winning the Nobel Peace Prize. This brave coalition of workers, industry, lawyers and human rights advocates is an inspiring reminder that lasting peace and security can only be achieved when citizens are empowered to forge their own future and that democracy is both possible and necessary in the North Africa and the Middle East.

In the 5 years since a Tunisian fruit vendor set himself on fire to protest an oppressive dictatorship, the Tunisian people have made remarkable strides in building an inclusive democracy, and the Quartet has played an indispensable role. When the promise of the Jasmine Revolution was in doubt, the Quartet helped to bring Tunisians together in a peaceful dialogue. With the Quartet's support, Tunisians voted in free elections, forged a new constitution that upholds human rights and equality for all people, including women and minorities, and formed a national unity Government, including secular and Islamist parties, showing that democracy and Islam can indeed thrive together.

Today's award is therefore also a tribute to the perseverance and courage of the Tunisian people who, in the face of political assassinations and terrorist attacks, have come together in a spirit of unity, compromise and tolerance. I welcomed President Caid Essebsi, Tunisia's first democratically elected President, to the White House this year to reaffirm America's support for Tunisia's democracy, and I have been proud to meet with Tunisian students: young men and women who are working to create more opportunity and prosperity in their country. In a region gripped by so much tumult and violence, Tunisia points the way to a better future, one in which stability is pursued through peaceful dialogue, not violence and division.

Just as the world must support the Tunisian people, we must stand with civil society groups around the world who advocate, often at great risk to themselves, for the human rights and inherent dignity of every human being. In this never-ending work for justice and peace, these fearless men and women have a steadfast partner in the United States of America.

Remarks at a Fundraiser for Senator Patricia L. Murray in Seattle, Washington
October 9, 2015

The President. Hello, Seattle! Oh, it is good to be back in Seattle! All right, all right, all right. Everybody, have a seat, have a seat. Thank you. Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Thank you, guys. Thank you. Thank you some much. Thank you. Love——

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back! Love Seattle! I love Seattle. I love Seattle, one of the most beautiful cities in America. Some of the best people that I've ever had the pleasure of knowing. A place where my mom went to high school, Mercer Island. [*Applause*] There you go. Way to go, Mercer Island!

So I just have a deep affection for Seattle. And I also get a chance to see some really good friends. For example, your outstanding Governor, Jay Inslee. Where's Jay? He's out here somewhere. King County Executive Dow Constantine. There he is with his bundle of joy. There she is. Your outstanding mayor, Ed Murray. And the main person that I'm out here to talk about—one of my favorite people in either Washington—your Senator, Patty Murray!

Now, when this State first sent Patty Murray to the Senate, she wasn't one of those lifelong politicians who just wanted a big job, fancy title. She was the mom in tennis shoes, wanted to help people and solve a few problems. And

what's great about it is, is that all these years later, that's still who she is. That's still who she is. She's just helped a whole lot of people and solved a whole bunch of problems.

She still comes home every weekend to listen to your cares and your concerns, and let's face it, also to see her grandchildren—[*laughter*]—who are adorable. And when Patty Murray talks, you know she's talking on your behalf and she's fighting on your behalf. She even keeps her watch, apparently, set to Washington State time, even when she's in Washington, DC.

And we are here today because next year, Patty Murray needs our help, the same way she's given us so much help all these years. We have to have Patty Murray back in the United States Senate. Now, we can talk about all the stuff she's done. You've seen her go to bat to keep good jobs right here in Washington State. And you've seen her fight to bring good new jobs in clean energy and infrastructure. When I was in the Senate, I sat next to Patty on the Veteran Affairs Committee. There is no fiercer advocate on behalf of our vets than Patty Murray is. And she takes it personally, drawing on the experience of her dad, a veteran. And so, whether it was keeping VA hospitals open here in Washington State or helping a World War II veteran break through the bureaucracy so he could receive his Purple Heart, there was never a problem that was too big or too small for Patty when it came to our veterans.

She gets stuff done. And she does it without drama, and she does it without fuss and without grandstanding. And she remains courteous and kind, but she's still tough and knows how to negotiate. She's what you want out of a political leader. And thanks to her and leaders like her—because we've got some really good people in the Democratic Party serving in Congress right now—because of them, I've had a partner during these last 7 years. And as a consequence, the hard work and basic decency and generosity of the American people has come through, and this country has made real progress.

When I took office, we were losing 800,000 jobs a month. The unemployment rate was on its way to 10 percent. Today, our businesses have created 13.2 million new jobs over a 5-year stretch. Unemployment is now 5.1 percent. I think the mayor told me it was 3 percent here in Seattle.

When I took office, more than 15 percent of Americans didn't have the basic security of health insurance. Today, we've covered 17 million people who didn't have it. For the first time on record, more than 90 percent of Americans are covered. For the first time. And insurance companies can't discriminate against anybody who's got a preexisting condition, can't discriminate against women just because they're women.

When I took office, we were hopelessly addicted to foreign oil. We've now cut our oil imports by more than half. We've tripled the amount of power we generate from wind. We generate 20 times more energy from the sun than we did when we took office. And that's generating a steady source of good jobs that cannot be outsourced, even as it helps us save this precious natural beauty that we see in the Pacific Northwest.

When I took office, our standing in the world was diminished. And today, America is mobilizing the world to confront new threats: leading to make sure Iran doesn't get a nuclear weapon, but doing so peacefully; leading the world towards global action on climate change. Thanks to leaders in Congress like Suzan DelBene and Derek Kilmer, we're leading the world in writing smarter trade rules for the 21st century. We've begun a new chapter of engagement with the Cuban people. We've brought tens of thousands of our brave troops home to their families.

We've got a lot of stuff done. High school graduation rates, the highest they've ever been. College enrollment, higher than ever before. We've helped millions of young people be able to afford a college education. Reading scores up, math scores seeing improvement. We've made enormous strides. But we all know we've got more work to do. When we see what we've accomplished, though, that should give us some confidence that we can get that work done.

When the cynics told us we could not change this country for the better, they were wrong. Marriage equality is now a reality in all 50 States. They said that wasn't going to happen. It happened. "Don't ask, don't tell" don't exist no more. Our relationship with the First Americans—our Native Americans—have never been better and stronger than they are today. There are more job openings today than at any time in our history. And by the way, our deficits are down, cut them by two-thirds. Teen pregnancy rates are down.

Which makes you wonder—[*laughter*]—why are all these Republican politicians so down on America? [*Laughter*] I mean, I know it's political season, but listening to them is really depressing. [*Laughter*] And it kind of doesn't match up with the truth. In the reality that they create, everything was terrific in 2008, in the middle of the worst recession in our lifetimes. Unemployment, uninsured rates going up; we're in two wars, hopelessly addicted to foreign oil, bin Laden still at large. To hear them tell it, those were the good old days. [*Laughter*] The golden years. And then, me and Patty, we messed it up. [*Laughter*] You—[*applause*].

Audience member. We love you, Mr. President!

The President. No, but this is important because folks are—look, folks are struggling in communities around the country sometimes; they are trying to figure out how they can see their wages go up, and they're still struggling to afford a college education. So there are reasons why people want to see more improvement. But if they don't remember where we were, then sometimes, they may feel like there's no hope. And that's what the other side is counting on, is folks forgetting what happened the last time they were in charge. You've got to give them credit for chutzpah. [*Laughter*] You've got to feel bad for the fact checkers who just cannot keep up with some of the stuff they say.

They're all like—they're saying, wait, wait, wait, what he just said about climate change, that's not true. But before that's happened, suddenly, they're saying something else about immigration that's not true. Or they're saying something about the deficit that's not true.

Now, part of the reason that they have to do this is because they keep running on the same policies that caused so many problems in the first place. More tax breaks for folks at the very top. Cutting investments in things like education. Repealing the Affordable Care Act and kicking millions off health insurance. Gutting Wall Street reform, risking another crisis by letting the biggest banks run wild. Denying that our planet is getting warmer and thereby unraveling new rules on power plants to protect the air our kids breathe.

I mean, just focus on climate change for a second. If 99 percent of doctors said you, "You've got diabetes"—[*laughter*]—"and here's what you need to do," you wouldn't call it a hoax. You wouldn't say, "The science isn't clear." You'd say, "Oh, Doc, what do I need to do?" So when 99 percent of scientists around the world say this is one of the defining issues not just of our generation, but of humankind, for generations to come, and you've got the chairman of the energy and environment committee in the Senate holding up a snowball during winter and saying, "See, it's not happening." [*Laughter*] No, that's a problem. You guys are laughing. [*Laughter*] It's a problem. That does not move us forward. It doesn't help more Americans get ahead.

The point is, there's a lot to feel good about in this country. But we can't have politicians spending all their time trying to scare people and trying to tap into fear, particularly fear of other people, in order to get elected. We've got too much work to do to engage in that politics of fear. We know what our challenges are, and we can solve them. We can solve them if we've got serious leaders like Patty and Jay.

We know what it takes to create even more jobs and grow the economy for everybody. We shouldn't be talking about shutting down the Government over Planned Parenthood. And Patty has been at the forefront of fighting the Republican attempts to do that. It would be terrible for the economy at a time when the global economy is softening. And it would be terrible for women's access to health care. We should be talking about instead opening up opportunities by investing in schools and

rebuilding our infrastructure, investing in research that cures diseases and clean energy that creates new jobs.

We know what it takes. We know what it takes to prepare our kids for a more competitive world. Patty is the point person on education in the Senate, and right now she's been fighting to expand pre-K, make sure every child succeeds, make it easier, not harder, for young people to go to college.

We know what to do. If we want to protect our children from climate change and make sure that Washington State and the Pacific Northwest and Alaska are able to remain the incredible, spectacular landscapes that they are; if we want to make sure that we don't leave to them a planet that's not beyond their capacity to repair, then we know the steps we have to take to reduce carbon. And our economy can grow even as we do the right thing by the environment.

We know that we've got to do something to prevent the kind of gun massacres that we saw just last week and 2 months before that and 2 months before that and 2 months before that. Because it is not normal. It is not inevitable. It doesn't just happen. It is a choice that we make, and it is a choice that we can change. There are ways to protect our children and protect our rights. Don't pretend that there aren't. Don't engage in a politics of fear.

We know we need to reform our criminal justice system so the punishment fits the crime, and we're not just perpetuating a pipeline from underfunded schools to overcrowded jails. We know we've got to update our immigration system so that it is fair and orderly and lawful. Anti-immigrant sentiment isn't going to do that. Fanning the flames of intolerance isn't going to do that.

There's a whole—this is not new, by the way. How many folks here have got a little Irish in them? Well, there was a time where they were talking about the Irish just like Mr. Trump is talking about the Mexicans now. [*Laughter*] Look it up. Used the same language. How many Italians around here? Well, they were talking about you too. [*Laughter*] America's greatness doesn't come from walls, it comes from building opportunity.

Now, I know sometimes in the other Washington, our politics doesn't always reflect the decency and the common sense of the American people. And I know how frustrating it can be. I'm right smack in the middle of dealing with it every single day. [*Laughter*] And for a whole variety of reasons—how our campaigns are financed, how district maps are drawn, the nature of political coverage—we've just got a system that all too often rewards division and polarization and short-term thinking and rewards people who score political points rather than actually trying to solve problems.

And look, it's comfortable to just say Washington doesn't work anymore, everything is dysfunctional, just to turn away. Or to start looking for false prophets who spout things that, under examination, don't really make any sense, but feed your biases and your fears. But we can't afford that. We've got too much work to do. Our system is only as good as what we put into it. Our democracy is us. It's not government and us, it's us. And government is part of us.

And when I ran for office, I didn't just say, leave it to the politicians. I didn't even say, "Yes, I can." I said, "Yes, we can." Our unfinished business does not depend on me or Patty or the next President we elect. It depends on all of us, as citizens, on what we, as people, can come together and do.

So, if you really care about these things, then it's not enough just to come to events like this, although I'm glad you came. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, a baby in the audience giggled.*]

The President. [*Laughter*] Yes, that was pretty funny, wasn't it? I've got—you've got to feel a sense of urgency about this. I need you to fight for Patty Murray next year. And then, I need you to organize and mobilize around the issues you care about. And we need you to care about referendums and ballot initiatives that can move the country forward, not just at the Federal level, but at the local level and at the State level, and get your friends to go out there and vote for them, and make sure that they're

aware of what's happening. Make sure your friends across the country know where their leaders stand. Get them to elect people who have the political will to reflect the goodness of the American people.

Democrats, I'm proud of the fact that we're not just the party that's against everything. I'm proud of the fact that we're not the party that says there's an "us" and a "them." I'm proud of the fact that our leaders care about politics, and they care about getting elected, but every once in a while do things that aren't popular, but are the right thing to do.

We need more of that. I'm not interested in people who are just against things; I want to see what we're for. We can't be the party that blames certain groups, we've got to enlist everybody in the hard work of democracy. We are at our best—this country is at its best—when we are willing to assume the best in others, instead of the bad, and try to recognize our own struggles and fears and hopes in somebody else.

That kid who's struggling to pay for college, that's our kid. The immigrant hoping to contribute, that was our grandparent or great-grandparent. That minority who's denied the right to vote, that should enrage us because that's a fellow citizen. That worker denied a living wage or equal pay for her equal effort or somebody who's not hired because of who they love, that's something that harms all of us. It's contrary to who we are. It's contrary to what America should be about. Their stories may not be precisely our own, but we see our stories in these people: our brothers, our sisters, our fellow Americans. Their fights are our fights.

That's what makes me proud to be a Democrat. I think we're right on most policy issues. I think our arguments are the right ones. I think we actually do analysis and try to base judgment on facts. [*Laughter*] But at our core, what I really am proud of is, is that we believe in this country, everybody deserves an equal shot. It's not just something that's nice to say. We have a responsibility to uphold that possibility, to fight for everybody so that everybody has got the same chances that we have and our kids have. And no matter who you are or what you look like or where you come from or who you love, you can make it if you try.

That's what we do. That's what we're about. That's what it means to be a Democrat. That's what I need you to fight for. That's why we've got to make sure that Patty Murray goes back to the United States Senate.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. All right.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:04 p.m. at the Westin Seattle hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Sabrina K.A. Constantine, daughter of County Executive Dow Constantine of King County, WA; Sen. James M. Inhofe; and Donald J. Trump, chairman and chief executive officer, Trump Organization, in his capacity as a 2016 Republican Presidential candidate. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 10.

The President's Weekly Address
October 10, 2015

Hi, everybody. This week, after 5 years of effort with 11 other nations, we reached agreement on a new trade deal that promotes American values and protects American workers. There's a reason this Trans-Pacific Partnership took 5 years to negotiate. I wanted to get the best possible deal for American workers. And that is what we've done. Here's why it matters.

Ninety-five percent of the world's consumers live outside our borders—95 percent. They want to buy American products. They want our cars, our music, our food. And if American businesses can sell more of their products in those markets, they can expand and support good jobs here at home.

So it's no wonder that exports played a huge role in helping America recover from the great recession. In fact, last year, we set a new record for American exports for the fifth year in a row, selling more than $2 trillion in goods and

services. Our exports support roughly 12 million American jobs, and they're jobs that typically pay better than other jobs.

But here's the thing: outdated trade rules put our workers at a disadvantage. And TPP will change that. Right now other countries can cut their costs by setting lower standards to pay lower wages. This trade agreement, TPP, will change that, holding partner countries to higher standards and raising wages across a region that makes up nearly 40 percent of the global economy.

Right now other countries charge foreign taxes on goods that are made in America. Japan, for example, puts a 38-percent tax on American beef before it even reaches the market. Malaysia puts a 30-percent tax on American auto parts. Vietnam puts taxes as high as 70 percent on every car American automakers sell there. Those taxes and other trade barriers put our workers at a disadvantage. It makes it more expensive to make goods here and sell them over there. Well, TPP is going to change that. It eliminates more than 18,000 of these taxes on American goods and services. And that way, we're boosting America's farmers, ranchers, manufacturers, and small-business owners: make it easier for them to sell their products abroad.

That's what it means to level the playing field for American workers and businesses. And when the playing field is level and the rules are fair, Americans can outcompete anybody in the world.

Now, I'm the first person who will say that past trade agreements haven't always lived up to their promise. Sometimes, they've been tilted too much in the direction of other countries, and we haven't gotten a fair deal. And that makes folks suspicious of any new trade initiatives. But let's be clear. Our future depends not on what past trade deals did wrong, but on doing new trade deals right. And that's what the TPP does.

It includes the strongest labor standards in history, from requiring fairer hours to prohibiting child labor and forced labor. It includes the strongest environmental standards in history. All these things level the playing field for us, because if they have to follow these rules, then they can't undercut us and sell their products cheaper because they're violating these rules. And unlike past trade agreements, these standards are actually enforceable.

Without this agreement, competitors that don't share our values, like China, will write the rules of the global economy. They'll keep selling into our markets and trying to lure companies over there; meanwhile, they're going to keep their markets closed to us. That's what's been going on for the last 20 years. That's what's contributed so much to outsourcing. That's what has made it easier for them to compete against us. And it needs to change.

With this Trans-Pacific Partnership, we are writing the rules for the global economy. America is leading in the 21st century. Our workers will be the ones who get ahead. Our businesses will get a fair deal. And those who oppose passing this new trade deal are really just accepting a status quo that everyone knows puts us at a disadvantage.

Look, you don't have to take my word for it. In the coming weeks and months, you'll be able to read every word of this agreement online well before I sign it. You'll be able to see for yourself how this agreement is better than past trade deals and how it's better for America's working families. You can learn more at whitehouse.gov. And I look forward to working with both parties in Congress to approve this deal and grow our economy for decades to come.

Thanks, everybody. And have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:45 p.m. on October 8 in the Blue Room at the White House for broadcast on October 10. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 9, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on October 10.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in San Francisco, California

October 10, 2015

The President. Hello, San Francisco! Hello, hello! Hello! It's good to see you. Everybody, have a seat, have a seat. Thank you! Thank you. It's good to be in California! Oh, I am fired up! I'm always fired up when I'm in San Francisco.

Listen, we've got a few folks here to help us kick off the weekend. The mayor of Oakland, Libby Schaaf is here. Where's the mayor? There she is over there. You may know these guys—if you're sitting behind them, it may be a problem—your NBA Champions, the Golden State Warriors in the house! They are wonderful young men, really impressive, and doing great in the community, in addition to doing great stuff on the court.

A little bit later, you're going to hear from a guy who I hear has been talking about launching a potential political career. [*Laughter*] You may have heard about this. Kanye is thinking about running for Speaker of the House. Couldn't get any stranger. [*Laughter*] But in case Kanye is serious about this whole POTUS thing—or as he calls it, "Peezy"—[*laughter*]—I do have some advice for him. Just some stuff that I've picked up on the way. First of all, you've got to spend a lot of time dealing with some strange characters who behave like they're on a reality TV show. [*Laughter*] So you've got to be cool with that.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. Love you too!

Second—this is the second important tip—saying that you have a "Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy," that's what's known as "off message" in politics. You can't say something like that. [*Laughter*] There are a lot of people who have lost their congressional seats saying things like that. [*Laughter*] So don't do that. That's number two. And number three, do you really think that this country is going to elect a Black guy from the South Side of Chicago with a funny name to be President of the United States? That is crazy. That's cray!

All right. We'll see what Kanye has to say when he gets out here.

So listen. Hold on, I'm going to get serious now. Settle down. I always get a rowdy crowd in San Francisco. Something always happens. [*Laughter*]

So, 7 years ago, we came together—a lot of people here were involved in that movement—not just to elect a President, but more importantly, to reaffirm our faith in that basic American ideal that in this country, people who love the country can change it. The notion that if things aren't the way they should be, we can work together, put our shoulders to the wheel, and make it better.

And there have been times when that faith has been tested, during wars and recessions and political obstruction. And there are always cynics out there who say you shouldn't believe that you can change things. And they said at the time we were naive to try. But you didn't believe the cynics. And together, we've made extraordinary progress.

When I took office, we were losing 800,000 jobs a month. The unemployment rate was on its way to 10 percent. Right now our businesses have created 13.2 million new jobs over the course of 67 months. It's the longest uninterrupted job growth streak in our history. Unemployment rate down to 5.1. When I took office, more than 15 percent of Americans didn't have health insurance. We've covered 17 million Americans through Obamacare. More than 90 percent of Americans now have health care coverage. For the first time ever, insurance companies can't discriminate against you because you've got a preexisting condition.

When I took office, we were hopelessly addicted to foreign oil. We've cut our oil imports by more than half, tripled the generation of wind power, 20 times more solar power, doubled clean energy, creating jobs that can't be outsourced.

When I took office, our standing in the world was diminished. Today, America is mobilizing the world to deal with the threats of a new age: leading the world to make sure Iran doesn't get a nuclear weapon, leading the

world towards action on climate change, leading the world to make sure we've got smarter trade rules for the 21st century, engaging the Cuban people for the first time in my lifetime, bringing our troops home to their families.

We've got more work to do.

Audience member. We love you! [*Laughter*]

The President. We've got more work to do, but we told the cynics that they were wrong. We said to them we could make a difference. Marriage equality is now a reality in all 50 States. More job openings today than any time in history. Our high school graduation rate is at an alltime high, and deficits have been cut by two-thirds.

So it's—there's almost no measure by which we're not better off than when I took office and than when we started this process for change. But it does kind of make you wonder, why are so many Republican politicians so down on America? Why are they so grumpy? [*Laughter*]

I mean, I know it's political season, but you—listening to them——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Listening to them, you would think that everything was terrific back in 2008—[*laughter*]—when we were going through the worst financial and economic crisis since the Great Depression, we were engaged in two wars, hopelessly addicted to foreign oil, bin Laden still at large. [*Laughter*] Apparently, according to them, those were the good old days. [*Laughter*] Those were the golden years. And then, I came in and messed it up. I mean, you've got to give credit for chutzpah, for just, like, just saying stuff and—[*laughter*]. And then, they just keep—the fact checkers can't even keep up. [*Laughter*] They're, like, wait, he said that? Wait, hold on, what? Huh? [*Laughter*] I mean, they just say stuff. Do you listen to them?

Audience members. No!

The President. I mean, you should listen to them a little bit just to hear what they're saying. And the problem is that part of the reason that they have to make stuff up is because they're running on the very same policies that caused all the problems in the first place: wanting to give more tax breaks to the folks at the very top; wanting to cut funding for education; wanting to repeal the Affordable Care Act and kick millions off their health care; gutting the health—the Wall Street reform that we put in place to make sure that we don't have another one of these financial crises; denying that the planet is getting warmer and trying to unravel the rules we're putting in place on power plants to protect the air that our kids breathe. That doesn't move us forward. That doesn't help Americans get ahead.

I—just on this climate change thing, I've just got to say something. [*Laughter*] I really do. If 99 percent of doctors said, "You've got diabetes"—[*laughter*]—what would you do? Would you say, this is a hoax? [*Laughter*] Would you say, this is a socialist plot? [*Laughter*] Or would you say, let me get some medicine and eat different and try to deal with this diabetes? Right?

Audience members. Right!

The President. Well, with climate change, 99 percent of scientists have said if we do not do something now, then we may not be able to deal with rising oceans, we may not be able to deal with increased drought, we may not be able to adapt fast enough so that our children and our grandchildren are able to enjoy this beautiful planet the same way we did. Ninety-nine percent of them!

And meanwhile, we've got the chairman of the Senate energy and environment committee holding up a snowball in the Senate—[*laughter*]—in the middle of winter, saying, see, it's not warming because there's a snowball that he found—[*laughter*]—I'm not making this up. Am I making this up?

Audience members. No!

The President. No, I am not. [*Laughter*] I mean, it would be funny if it wasn't, like, this big, existential problem.

The point is, there is so much to feel good about in this country. And it's a shame when politicians are spending all their time not just trying to make people feel bad to score political points, but to try to spark fear, to make people scared. Especially when we've got so much work to do. Would don't have time to be

scared; we've got to get to work. And we can solve our problems if we have serious leaders who are willing to look at the facts, look at the evidence, be practical, exercise common sense, embrace our responsibilities as citizens.

We know what it takes to create more jobs and grow the economy for everybody. Right now in Washington, they're talking about shutting down the Government over Planned Parenthood.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. We should be talking about opening up new opportunities, to invest in schools that educate our kids and rebuild or roads and our bridges and our ports. Invest in research that alleviates hunger and cures diseases. That's what we should be doing.

We know we've got to protect our kids from climate change. We can't leave the planet to the point where it's beyond the capacity to repair. So we're going to have to do something about it. We can, but we've got to start now.

We know we've got to do something to prevent the kind of gun massacre that we see with growing frequency in this country. It's not normal. This is not how it has to be. This is a choice that we are making. We don't have to have young boys in Oakland getting shot every day. We don't have to have kids in classrooms feeling threatened because somebody has got an AK–47. We don't need to have that. That's a choice we make. We've got to make a different choice. We've got to make a different choice. These things aren't inevitable. These are things under our control. There are ways we can do that to protect our children and, yes, preserve the Constitution. I know a little bit about this; the Constitution, I used to teach it.

We know we have to reform our criminal justice system so that the punishment fits the crime and we're not just perpetuating a pipeline from underfunded schools to overcrowded jails. And we know we've got to update our immigration system so that it is fair and orderly and lawful. Anti-immigrant sentiment doesn't solve a problem. It's just designed to tap into some of our worst impulses and score political points. Fanning intolerance isn't going to solve a problem. America's greatness doesn't come from building walls. It comes from building opportunity.

And when I say—when I hear folks talking sometimes the way they talk about our new wave of immigrants, I just want to remind everybody, there is a long history of anti-immigrant sentiment in this country. Unless you're one of the First Americans, unless you're Native American, your parents or grandparents or great-grandparents—how many folks here got some Irish in them? Yes, well, they used to talk about Irish folks just the way they talk about folks coming over the borders today. Same thing.

I know that sometimes it feels like our politics doesn't reflect the decency that we see in our friends, our neighbors, our communities. And I know that gets frustrating. We've got a system that seems to reward division and polarization and short-term thinking. And we've got a media that likes to concentrate on conflict, and you get attention, you can cash in by saying the most outrageous things—a system that rewards people trying to score political points rather than actually get things done.

But it's not enough just to be cynical and say Washington doesn't work and throw up your hands and be done with it. We can't afford that. We've got too much work to do. Our system only works when we recognize that the government isn't something separate from us, it is us. Our democracy is us. The most important office in a democracy is citizens. It's you. When I ran for office back in 2007, some of you could not pronounce my name—[*laughter*]—and then, things started rolling, and folks were getting excited—I said don't just leave it to me—or any politician. I didn't say, "Yes, I can." I said, "Yes, we can." And so our unfinished business doesn't just depend on me or Congress or the next President we elect, it depends on all of us, what we do together, all of us.

So, if you care about the things we talked about, you're going to have to stay active and you're going to have to stay involved. Not just at events like this where Kanye is playing. [*Laughter*] Not just when the Warriors show up. You've got to be out there organizing and mobilizing around issues you care about. And

you've got to care about the referendums and ballot initiatives that move this country forward at the State and local level. You've got to get your friends informed and involved. You've got to make that they vote. You've got to follow the issues. You've got to make sure that they know where their leaders stand and if they are not doing the right thing, that they are hearing from you and potentially being voted out by you.

You have to have the tenacity and the focus to make sure this system works. You can't just sit back——

Audience member. Four more years!

The President. Well, that we can't do because Michelle is not going to let that happen. [*Laughter*] And the Constitution forbids it. But I will be a citizen again, and I am going to be working alongside you to make sure. I'm just going to be an ordinary citizen. I will not have elected office, but it doesn't mean I stop working on these issues. I'm just getting started. We're going to be working side-by-side to make sure the system is responsive.

And you know, we can't just be the party that's against things. We've got to be for things. We can't be the party that blames certain groups; we've got to say to everybody, let's join together, make this democracy work. We are at our best when we assume the best in others, not the worst; when we try to recognize in other people our own struggles and our fears and our hopes. So that that kid who is struggling to pay for college, that's our kid. The immigrant hoping to contribute, that's our grandparent or great-grandparent. The African American denied the right to vote, that is diminishing your democracy. A worker denied a living wage or equal pay for her equal effort, that hurts all of us. Their stories may not be our own, but we can make their fight our own.

That's what makes me proud to be a Democrat. I think we are right on most policy issues. I think our arguments are the right ones. But what I am really proud of is the fact that this is the party that stands for the idea that everybody deserves an equal shot. It's not just something to say, it's an obligation and a responsibility we have to uphold: to fight for everybody so that nobody gets left out. So that, no matter who you are, no matter where you were born, no matter what you look like, what your last name is, no matter who you love, if you work hard in this country, you can make it; and that we, as a society, are willing to hold hands and lift you up and give you the opportunity to succeed.

That's what we stand for as Democrats. That's what I believe this country stands for. That's what's at stake in this upcoming election and in the elections to come. And that's why I need you to be part of this process and part of this team.

I love you, San Francisco! Let's get to work.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:34 a.m. at the Warfield theater. In his remarks, he referred to musician Kanye O. West; and Sen. James M. Inhofe.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Los Angeles, California

October 10, 2015

The President. Hello, everybody! Hello, Los Angeles! Everybody, have a seat. Relax a little bit. It's hot out here; we don't want to get you overheated. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. Welcome home!

The President. It is good to be back in L.A. And let me begin by thanking Robin and Ed and their parents and their really good-looking sons for hosting us all here today. Give them a big round of applause. Now, it's bad enough having Secret Service in your house and then having a whole bunch of folks come too, trampling on your grass. [*Laughter*] It's an ordeal. But it is so sweet of them to do it. We really appreciate them.

I have a couple of other people I want to acknowledge. We have one of our finest Mem-

bers of Congress here who traveled up from San Diego—he's going to fly back down with me—Scott Peters. Give Scott—where's Scott? Give him a big round of applause. Scott does outstanding work on making sure that everything from equal pay to making sure that we have the kinds of trade arrangements that are good for this country, to making sure that folks who don't have opportunities are getting the kinds of chances and able to go to college. And he not only has a good heart, but he also knows how to get things done. So we're really, really proud of Scott. Appreciate him.

And then, I've got to say thank you to Jamie Foxx. Now, Jamie has done probably three or four events on our behalf during the course of various campaigns. And everybody always loves Jamie so much that it's a little hard to follow him. [*Laughter*] I can't sing like him. I can't dance like him. I can't tell a joke like him. I can't act like him. So it puts a little bit of pressure. But despite somebody who obviously loves fun, makes people feel good, Jamie is also somebody who cares a lot about this country and our community. And I just want to say how much I appreciate him and his mom and dad who are here, who we are grateful to.

They obviously did something right. And they also have stories, I'm sure, that we could hear from them about Jamie's misbehavior. [*Laughter*] But we don't have the time to hear all of them. [*Laughter*]

This is an interesting time in our country's history. We went through, 7 years ago, the worst financial crisis and economic crisis in our country's history. We were losing about 800,000 jobs per month. The entire financial system was on the verge of collapse. People were losing their homes, their jobs, their retirement. And it wasn't just here in the United States; the problems that had started on Wall Street were rippling all across the globe.

And when I came in, it was based on a commitment I made to you that if you believed that we could change this country, if we were willing to work together and put aside some of the pettiness and the cynicism, if we could channel the basic decency of the American people, not just in our homes and our communities and our workplaces, but in our government, that we could make life better for ourselves and for future generations.

And 7 years later, after a lot of work and a lot of gray hair, we can look back and see the kind of progress that we made. The cynics were wrong because, in fact, we took an unemployment rate that was at 10 percent and brought it down to 5.1 percent. We've got the most job openings of any time in American history. We were able to stabilize the financial markets, put in place reforms on Wall Street to prevent the kind of reckless behavior that caused the crisis in the first place. We provided 17 million people with health insurance that didn't have it before.

We cut our oil imports in half, doubled clean energy. We produce three times as much wind energy as we did when I came into office, 20 times as much solar energy as when I came into office. We're reducing our carbon. We're finally doing something about climate change—while still growing the economy—to make sure we're passing on a better planet to our kids and our grandkids.

Reading scores are up. High school graduation up. College enrollment up. We reduced our deficit by two-thirds. We saved an auto industry that was on the verge of collapse, and now Detroit and American autos are selling better than ever.

We were in the middle of two wars, and the world's opinion about America was as low as it had been in a very long time. And not only were we able to end those wars and bring our troops back home to their families, but around the globe, we brought about changes that showed how to lead not just militarily, but lead by example and lead through our values and lead through diplomacy. Whether it's dealing with Ebola, and we mobilized the entire international community to save hundreds of thousands of lives in West Africa; or opening to Cuba for the first time in a long time; or making sure that Iran doesn't get a nuclear weapon, but doing it in a way that doesn't lead to war.

So the good news is, we've made a lot of progress. The bad news is that with all the work that remains to be done, we've got a

Congress that is broken. And you don't have to take my word for it. If you've been reading the papers over the last couple days, you have a pretty good sense that it's broken. And part of the reason it's broken is because money has come to dominate too much of the political agenda in Washington, that lobbyists have too much influence. Part of it has to do with the fact that the way our system is constructed requires compromise, and we have ideologues who believe that unless they get 100 percent of what they want that they're willing to burn down the house.

But part of it also has to do with the fact that there is a fundamental decision we have to make as a country in terms of our values: What do we believe, what do we care about? I believe that this country works best not when we're only thinking about ourselves, but when we're thinking about others. I believe that our economy grows best when folks at the top are not the only ones doing well, but that everybody is participating in growth and everybody has got a shot and everybody is getting an education, everybody has a chance to work hard to achieve the American Dream.

I believe that we are strengthened as a nation of immigrants and that unless you're one of the First Americans—unless you're a Native American—one of your parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, somebody else—they came here and made our country stronger. And when you hear people fearmongering and fanning the flames of intolerance about new immigrants and today's arrivals, just remember they used to say the same thing about the Irish and they used to say the same thing about the Italians. They used to say the same thing about the Chinese workers who were brought over here to help build the railroads. This country would not be what it is unless we had immigration and strivers and dreamers who come here and say, we don't have to settle what was; we can create new beginnings and a new life. That's who we are. It's in our DNA.

I believe that America is best when we treat everybody with fairness and respect, not just on the basis of whether it's making sure that we're not discriminating because of race or gender, but also that we're not discriminating against somebody because of who they love. And one of the proudest things that we've been able to achieve during the course of my Presidency is, marriage equality is now the law in all 50 States. Not just one or two or three or five, but everywhere.

I believe that we've got to make an investment in our futures, that rather than a pipeline from underfunded schools to prisons, that we should be investing in early childhood education, and we should be investing in after-school programs. And we should be investing in making sure that the best teachers are able to thrive in classrooms that are properly equipped and properly financed; and that we should make sure that everybody can go to college, not just folks who were born in the right ZIP Code, not just people who happen to have parents who had also gone to college. We want everybody educated. And when they are, we all benefit, not just those young people, but everybody.

Because in the 21st century, our economy is going to depend on who's got the best workers, who innovates the most, who has the capacity to continually adapt to technological change.

I believe that our foreign policy works best when we put our shoulder behind diplomacy. I make no apologies as Commander in Chief in being willing to order the application of force when it comes to protecting the American people, but that shouldn't be our first resort, that should be our last resort. And we should make sure that even as we fight against terrorists like ISIL, even as we make sure that we're upholding international order and international law that we're also investing in some young child in Africa who doesn't have a classroom, some farmer in a poor country that needs some electricity. Because that's also good for us, because if they're doing well and those markets are growing, then we're going to ultimately benefit as well and we'll have a more peaceful world.

So, on all these issues, the good news is, is that we have within our ability—we have within our grasp the ability to solve them. Even an issue as big as climate change. And I know it's hot today. [*Laughter*] We can't correlate any

single weather event to climate change, but what we know is, is that the planet is getting hotter. And here in California, what we know is, is that the historic drought that you're going through is not going to get better if temperatures rise and snowpacks are nonexistent and water becomes scarce and wildfires rage all across the West.

I was talking to some folks in San Francisco about climate change, and I said if 99 percent of doctors said to you that you had diabetes, you wouldn't argue with them. [*Laughter*] You wouldn't say, "This is a hoax." [*Laughter*] So when 99 percent of scientists say that the planet is getting warmer and if we do not do something about it that we're going to have unimaginable consequences and our children and our grandchildren are going to pay the price and they're not going to be able to reverse it and the time to act is now, then we have to believe them.

And we can't have the chairman of the energy and environment committee, a Republican, in the Senate lift up a snowball in the Senate and explain how this is proof that climate change isn't happening. [*Laughter*] We can't have that. And it would be funny if it wasn't so serious.

So the reason you're here is because you believe that everybody should have a fair shot. You believe in justice; you believe in equality; you believe in opportunity; you believe in diplomacy. You believe that America's greatness is measured not just by our skyscrapers and our GDP and how many billionaires we have, but also how do we treat the vulnerable and the infirm and our aged, and our poor and our hungry.

But it's not enough just to believe in it. How are we going to make sure that that vision we have is realized and we continue what we started 7 years ago? As many of you know, I will not be on the ballot in this next election.

Audience members. No!

The President. No, this is a really good thing. [*Laughter*] At least, if you talk to my wife. [*Laughter*] So I'm here today before you not out of self-interest, but because I'm a fellow citizen and after I leave office 15 months from now, I'll have as much of a stake as I ever had—as a citizen—in making sure that our best selves and our highest ideals continue to be promoted. And the only way to do that is through the political system.

I mean, I want to be clear about this. There is so much work that has to be done outside the political system. And there are so many people here who are involved in incredible philanthropic efforts, and you're volunteering, and you're participating in nongovernmental organizations, and you're making contributions to help disadvantaged kids or to help save the environment. You're doing all kinds of wonderful stuff. But if we don't get our politics right, if it continues to be broken and mean and divisive, then ultimately, we're not going to meet the moment. We're not going to meet our challenges.

And that requires you citizens to participate. When I ran in 2008, a lot of stuff converged to elect a young Senator with a very unusual name. [*Laughter*] It was a little bit of lighting in a bottle. And it was exciting, partly because it was so unexpected and so new. But you'll remember what our slogan was back then. It wasn't, "Yes, I can." It was, "Yes, we can." And I very purposely said to everybody at every event all across this country as I was campaigning that changing the country and moving it in a better direction is not just going to depend on what I do, it's going to depend on what we do. Because I can't do it by myself.

And that remains true. We've got to have, all of us, the kind of effort and sense of purpose to make sure that we're electing people who care about climate change, that we're electing people who want to invest in early childhood education and not just build more prisons. We've got to have the same sense of urgency about making sure that not just our kids can afford to go to college, but that kid on the other side of the tracks is able to go to college. And we can make it happen. But it requires us to feel it and work for it.

My favorite statistic in 2012 was that among people who don't vote, I beat Mitt Romney by 25 percent. [*Laughter*] Now, I did fine. I ended up getting over 50 percent in

two consecutive elections, which hasn't been done since Mr. Eisenhower. But think about it—40 percent—more than 40 percent of people still didn't vote. And if they had, I would have had a Congress that would have cooperated with me, and we would have been growing faster and put more people back to work, and more kids would be in school, and we would have more early childhood centers around the country, and we would have been investing more in research and development. And we would have been making so much more progress. But they didn't. They didn't participate because they had listened to the cynics who told them that nothing changes and nothing is going to work.

That's what we're fighting more than anything else: cynicism and complacency. And so I hope that you come away from this—look, it's cool hanging out with Jamie Foxx. [*Laughter*] It's nice that you recognize some celebrities in the audience and you got to take a picture of yourself with the President in the background. [*Laughter*] I see some of it. [*Laughter*] Sending it to your friends: me and Barack hanging out. [*Laughter*] See, look at Chris right there. [*Laughter*] See, I know that. I see that. I've seen that trick. [*Laughter*] But the question is going to be, what do you do afterwards, the day after, the day after that.

And that's where we need you to stay involved and to stay engaged. And not just writing a check. It's not just a matter of helping to finance the young organizers who are going to go out there and knock door-to-door and get people registered and get them voting. It's also you talking to your friends, you talking to your neighbors, you talking to your coworkers. Young people who are here—at least if you're over the age of three—[*laughter*]—start getting informed about the issues. Because the more we understand that this government is us, the choices we make matter, the more this democracy is going to thrive and the more America is going to thrive.

And I'll just close with this point. Yesterday I went to Oregon to visit with the families of the people who'd been shot at this community college. And it seems like I have to do this every 2 months or so. And while I was there, there were actually two more shootings at two other schools—one in Arizona, one in Texas—while I was visiting the families of these victims. And some of these families were trying to process their 18-year-old child who they'd invested their entire lives in—everything they hold dear, everything they could do—and gotten them finally off to college, and that first week, they were taken.

And there were actually some people—it's a fairly conservative community, so there were some folks who were protesting about their Second Amendment rights as they understood them. But overwhelmingly, I think it was just shock and grief. And the families appreciated the fact that I was expressing condolences on behalf of the American people and that they weren't alone in this.

But I came away feeling just as strongly as I did the day it happened when I went to that podium in the White House to say, this is a choice we make. This is not a natural disaster. This is not inevitable. This doesn't happen in other countries. We're not more violent than other developed countries in the world; it's just that when we commit violence, we're more deadly. It's a decision that we make. And it's not just mass shootings, but it's the same decision that leads us to have, in neighborhoods all across this country—in big cities, and sometimes in smaller ones—young people shot every day on the streets. It's easier to buy a gun than buy a book.

And this is an example of something that we can't change unless Congress, elected officials change their attitudes. And their attitudes won't change unless the American public's attitudes change. And so we can act outraged each time this happens, and it just continues and perpetuates itself. Or we can say, enough. We have a different vision of what America is going to look like.

What is true on gun violence is true on every other issue that matters to you. And if you doubt that, in fact, we can bring about change, just think about what we've done in the last 7 years. Yes, or just run around. [*Laughter*] And get some exercise. [*Laughter*]

Think about what we've done the last 7 years. We did not do that simply because you elected me. We did that together. We did that because Members of Congress like Scott Peters are willing to take votes. We did that because we had a majority in the House and the Senate that were willing to pass Obamacare. We did that because we changed people's minds about "don't ask, don't tell" and said that don't exist no more. We did that with you.

Don't stop now. Let's keep going. Let's keep going, because if we do, I promise you, 7 years from now, we're going to look back and feel just as good about the progress we've made. And there will still be more work to do, but we'll be confident that, as Dr. King often said, "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." It bends towards justice. It just doesn't bend on its own; we've got to help it bend that way.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:52 p.m. at the residence of Ed and Robin Berman. In his remarks, he referred to Louise A. Talley Dixon and Shahid Abdula, parents of actor Jaime Foxx; and Sen. James M. Inhofe. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Los Angeles
October 10, 2015

Thank you. There are some pretty good acoustics in here. I'm going to start singing. [*Laughter*]

Well, let me, first of all, just thank James and Michael. First of all, James is doing outstanding work as the Ambassador to Spain. Part of our incredible diplomatic team all around the world that are solving problems, dealing with conflicts, papering over misunderstandings, and really strengthening the ties that bind us with our allies.

Michael, in addition to having made the Oval Office more presentable, is, in fact, the only person other than my wife and my two daughters who does feel the need to tease me incessantly. [*Laughter*] I know I'm not alone in this. But he does have a certain roguish charm that allows him to get away with it. What is also true is, is that he and James have been just great friends from the start, and not just to me, but to Michelle and to Malia and Sasha. They're really part of the family. And so I just want to say to them how much we appreciate them and the fact that you guys have been in our lives this whole time. So thank you so much.

I've got a lot of other friends here. I look around the room, and there are people who have supported me since the very beginning when most people couldn't pronounce my name. And somebody observed the fact that I'm not wearing a tie today. Some of you will recall that I used to never wear a tie when I was campaigning right at the beginning. And I was explaining that I think around halfway through the campaign people started realizing that it was conceivable I might end up being President, and so David Axelrod came to me one day, and he said, listen, Barack, you've got to start wearing a tie—[*laughter*]—because you don't look old enough potentially to be President when you look casual. So we've got to dress you up a little bit. So we started wearing a tie. I was wearing a tie all the time. And now that I am so gray there's no doubt that I'm old enough to not only be President, but to have been President, we're reverting back to a more casual style. So this is something you can anticipate for the next 15 months. I think we're going to start dialing down the tie thing. [*Laughter*] Probably, because I always spill things on my ties.

I'm going to be very brief at the front end because I just want this to be a dialogue. We're at a critical time in our history, and that is a cliché, but this time it's really true. We have done really good, important work. And I say "we" purposely because I could not have done it alone. I couldn't have done it without the

support of a lot of the people in this room. But we have gone from a world economic crisis, a world financial crisis, two wars, a diminished standing for the United States around the world to 67 straight months of job creation, an unemployment rate of 5.1 percent, the most job openings ever recorded.

We have doubled the production of clean energy, cut our consumption of oil in half, solar power 20 times more today than when we took office, wind power three times more. We've cut the deficit by two-thirds. We're growing faster than every other large advanced nation on Earth. Reading scores are up, college enrollment is up. Seventeen million people have health insurance that didn't have it before.

There's almost no measure by which we're not better off now than we were when I came into office. But what is also true is that during this time, some big problems haven't fully gotten solved. Most prominently, the fact that wages and incomes for ordinary Americans are still flat, which makes people feel insecure and anxious and uncertain as to whether their kids are going to do better than they did. And when people are anxious economically, the politics of fear oftentimes can override the politics of hope.

And so what we see—most prominently in the Presidential campaigns, but what we're seeing in the struggles taking place in the House—is that politics of fear being fanned and expanding. And it can express itself in anti-immigration rhetoric. It can express itself in hunkering back on the need to take care of folks who are vulnerable or to provide more opportunity for people who've been locked out of the American Dream. It can express itself in sort of cheap jingoism and militarism and nationalism that's not grounded in our national security interests. But it's a dangerous path. And it's a path that, during certain intervals in our history, we have taken when people feel insecure. And there's this other path, and that's the politics of hope.

And the Democratic Party is by no means perfect. There are often times when I want to smack us across the head. We're not immune from money. We're not immune from lobbyists. We're not immune from pushing aside what we know to be good policy in favor of something that is a little more expedient. But there are two things that the Democratic Party does that makes me proud to be a Democrat. Number one, when things are really hard and really matter, the leadership of the Democratic Party and, for the most part, the rank and file, are willing to do the right thing even when the politics doesn't work.

That was true for the Iran deal. The politics were not easy, but it was the right thing to do. And we won that argument on the merits, and ultimately, there were people who voted just because they heard the arguments, and they said, you know what, even though, on a less consequential issue, I might be taking the more expedient political vote, on this one I've got to do the right thing.

It was true when I came into office, with the bank bailout. Terrible politics, but had we not taken those steps we could not have stabilized the financial system—in the same way that had I not bailed out the auto industry—which, by the way, polled at 10 percent when we did it—we would not have had a resurgent auto industry that's now selling more cars than ever before.

So that's one thing that makes me proud to be a Democrat. When push comes to shove and something is important, folks are willing to stand up and do things that are contrary to political interest because they're in the interest of the country.

And the second thing—and this is fundamental. This goes to the heart of what we are as a country. At our core, the overwhelming majority of Democrats believe in the basic proposition that it shouldn't matter where you were born, what your last name is, what you look like, what your faith is or whether you have no faith, you are entitled to work hard to achieve the American Dream, and we all have a stake in making sure everybody gets a fair shot.

And that, more than anything else, is what makes America, America. And if you have a contrary ideal, if you have folks who are expressing the notion that there's an "us" and a

"them" and some people are deserving of poverty and some people are inevitably destined for incarceration and some people are less than I am because of who they love and women have a particular role that they have to play, and if they don't, somehow, that's contrary to the rules we've set—when you have that kind of an attitude, America goes backwards, and we don't succeed.

So we've got a very stark set of choices right now that manifest themselves across the board. And I say this pretty objectively, because I'm not intrinsically partisan. And in fact, I've been felted at times by folks in my own party for not being sufficiently partisan. But I don't think we come out of the womb Democrat or Republican. And I come from a State where the first Republican President was pretty good, a guy named Lincoln. And there have been times where the Democrats were on the wrong sides of issues.

But I will tell you, at this moment in history, the choices are stark, and facts, evidence, values are on our side. And the other side has gone off the deep end. And what you're witnessing in the House fight right now is that even deeply conservative folks are not considered ideologically pure enough, and we would rather burn the house down than admit the possibility of a democratic process that requires compromise.

And we have to beat that kind of mindset. This is not something where we can just let it pass, because if we let it pass, then you've got people in charge who don't believe in climate change, don't just not want to do anything about it, don't believe in it. We start getting folks who are willing to run funny numbers on the budget that will slash education funding and funding for the disabled and seniors and suggest that somehow it's justified by economic theories that you can't find in the textbooks.

So I feel as much urgency about this upcoming election as I've felt about any election, and I am not on the ballot. And I'm going to be working just as hard this time as I was in 2012 and 2008. And you need to be too.

Because we've got some good people, and one of them, Scott, is back here. Scott Peters is a wonderful Congressman from San Diego. He's been traveling with us in California. You should get to know him. He takes tough votes and does the right thing. And it's not always easy. And it matters whether or not we're going to be able to get more folks like Scott into the House and preserve the Senate. And I definitely need a Democratic successor, because the alternatives that we're seeing right now are not what I have in mind for the future of America.

So, with that, let me take questions. But I just wanted people to understand the context in which we're talking here. This is not sort of an abstract exercise. This is not a seminar. This is some serious business about things that we care deeply about.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:20 p.m. at the residence of U.S. Ambassador to Spain James Costos and Michael S. Smith. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Death of Former White House Regional Communications Director Brandon D. Lepow

October 13, 2015

Seven years ago, like a lot of young people, Brandon Lepow got into politics because he believed he could change his country for the better. And in his time on the campaign trail and in the White House, both as a traveling aide and as a spokesman, he was tireless in that effort: hard-working, cheerful, one of the most unfailingly kind and gracious people I've had the honor to know. He was someone that any American could be proud to have working on their behalf.

Last night we lost Brandon after a long battle with leukemia. It's a testament to his dedication to others that, over the past few months,

more than 50 of his White House colleagues traveled to spend time with him and support his family as he underwent treatment in Texas. We all have heavy hearts today, and all of us, Michelle and I included, share our condolences and all our support with Brandon's family, his legion of friends, and his wonderful and courageous wife Theresa. Theirs is one of the great love stories. They, in many ways, kept the rest of us going. And Theresa will always be a part of our family.

To know Brandon Lepow was to know that he didn't need to get into politics to change the world, after all. He made his 32 years count. And those of us who knew him are better for it.

Statement on the Retirement of President's Task Force on 21st-Century Policing Cochair Charles H. Ramsey
October 14, 2015

I want to offer my heartfelt gratitude to Commissioner Charles "Chuck" Ramsey for his nearly five decades of leadership and service with some of this Nation's largest law enforcement agencies. From Chicago to DC to Philadelphia, Commissioner Ramsey has always supported our women and men in uniform and the communities they bravely serve and protect each and every day. While I've known about his outstanding work over the years, it was when I appointed Chuck as a Cochair of my Task Force on 21st-Century Policing that I was able to rely on his counsel and leadership. For several months earlier this year, he played a vital role in bringing together leaders from across the country to create a clear and concise report including key recommendations for building stronger trust between communities and the law enforcement agencies that protect them. I am extraordinarily grateful for Chuck's service and wish him an enjoyable and restful retirement.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployment of United States Armed Forces Personnel to Cameroon
October 14, 2015

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On October 12, 2015, approximately 90 U.S. Armed Forces personnel began deploying to Cameroon with the consent of the Government of Cameroon. This deployment is in advance of the deployment of additional U.S. Armed Forces personnel to Cameroon to conduct airborne intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance operations in the region. The total number of U.S. military personnel to be deployed to Cameroon is anticipated to be up to approximately 300. These forces are equipped with weapons for the purpose of providing their own force protection and security, and they will remain in Cameroon until their support is no longer needed.

I directed the deployment of U.S. forces in furtherance of U.S. national security and foreign policy interests, and pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148). I appreciate the support of the Congress in this action.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Orrin G. Hatch, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Remarks at PBS's "A Celebration of American Creativity: In Performance at the White House"

October 14, 2015

The President. Well, good evening, everybody.

Audience members. Good evening.

The President. Welcome to the White House. You all look very sharp. [*Laughter*]

Tonight we honor the 50th anniversary of the National Endowment for the Arts and the Humanities with a celebration of one of our most precious gifts: American creativity.

I want to begin by thanking tonight's performers. We have an unbelievable lineup: Ms. Carol Burnett, Buddy Guy, Queen Latifah, MC Lyte, Audra McDonald, Brian Stokes Mitchell, Keb' Mo', Smokey Robinson, and Trombone Shorty, Esperanza Spalding, James Taylor, Usher. This is an eclectic bunch. [*Laughter*]

But that's what tonight is all about. In 1965, a year that President Lyndon Johnson signed into law some of America's most important achievements—Medicare and Medicaid, the Voting Rights Act, the Immigration Act—he also signed a law creating the National Endowment of the Arts and the Humanities. And he did this because he believed in a Great Society that, in his words, "serves not only the needs of the body and the demands of commerce, but the desire for beauty and the hunger for community."

Creativity. It's always played a central role in the life of our Nation. It's our artists who hold up a mirror to our society, reminding us of our common purpose and our collective obligations. Our music, in particular, has always been an honest reflection of who we really are: a reflection of our successes and our shortcomings; of our diversity, our imagination, our restlessness; of our stubborn insistence on blending the old with the new, tradition with experimentation.

We have lofty expectations of ourselves, but we don't often do lofty in our music. American music is grounded in the stories of real people living real lives, telling their stories. Whether jazz or blues, country or rock and roll, Broadway or hip-hop, it's rooted in records of slavery and segregation, and Dust Bowl and Depression, winning wars and coming home, working and losing that proud factory job; tales of hometowns and the 'hood; always tales of falling in love and having your heart broken.

In America, we turn life into lyrics. "Listen to the lyrics," Buddy Guy once said. "We're singing about everyday life: rich people trying to keep money, poor people trying to get it"—[*laughter*]—"and everyone having trouble with their husband or wife!" [*Laughter*] Except me. [*Laughter*]

By the way, people sometimes ask me what the biggest perk of being President is. Number one is the plane. [*Laughter*] Number two is Buddy Guy comes here all the time to my house with his guitar. [*Laughter*] And then, Esperanza brings her bass, and stuff happens around here. [*Laughter*]

But that quintessentially American creative spirit—sowed in our own soil, defined by our own experience, flavored by each new wave of immigrants that reaches our shores—that may be our greatest export: the American soundtrack. To believe that, you've just got to watch the way that people around the world who weren't born in the U.S.A. fall in love with it. It gives you a sense of the chords we touch through our music, through our art, through our creativity.

And that's what you'll hear tonight, across performances and genres: a road trip through a sprawling map of American music. You'll hear it in the "12-bar, bent-note melody" of Chicago blues and Delta blues, in New Orleans jazz and Nashville country, in the Motown of Detroit and the show tunes that gave Broadway its lights. And you'll hear it, loudly, in the rock and roll and hip-hop that parents keep telling their kids to turn down, until, then, we become the parents. [*Laughter*]

America, that is who we are. And somewhere out there right now is the next Esperanza Spalding picking up her first bass or the next Audra McDonald singing into her hairbrush; the next James Taylor strumming his first chords.

It might not sound so good yet. They're still learning how to play; maybe they're annoying their neighbors. They might not have quite enough experience for the depth of lyrics that you'll hear tonight. But music has taken hold of their souls. And our task is to make sure that no matter who they are or where they come from or what they look like or what their story is, this country is one that cultivates their talent and gives them the chance to tell it. That's got to be true from school music programs to the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities. We've got to support our artists and celebrate their work and do our part to ensure that the American creative spirit that has defined us from the very beginning will thrive for generations to come.

So, with that, it's my great pleasure to welcome to our stage our first performer, Keb' Mo'.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:47 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to musicians Dana E. "Queen Latifah" Owens, Lana M. "MC Lyte" Moorer, Kevin "Keb' Mo'" Moore, Troy "Trombone Shorty" Andrews, and Usher T. Raymond IV.

Remarks on United States Military Strategy in Afghanistan and an Exchange With Reporters

October 15, 2015

Good morning. Last December, more than 13 years after our Nation was attacked by Al Qaida on 9/11, America's combat mission in Afghanistan came to a responsible end. That milestone was achieved thanks to the courage and the skill of our military, our intelligence, and civilian personnel. They served there with extraordinary skill and valor, and it's worth remembering especially the more than 2,200 American patriots who made the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan.

I visited our troops in Afghanistan last year to thank them on behalf of a grateful nation. I told them they could take great pride in the progress that they helped achieve. They struck devastating blows against the Al Qaida leadership in the tribal regions, delivered justice to Usama bin Laden, prevented terrorist attacks, and saved American lives. They pushed the Taliban back so the Afghan people could reclaim their communities, send their daughters to school, and improve their lives. Our troops trained Afghan forces so they could take the lead for their own security and protect Afghans as they voted in historic elections, leading to the first democratic transfer of power in their country's history.

Today, American forces no longer patrol Afghan villages or valleys. Our troops are not engaged in major ground combat against the Taliban. Those missions now belong to Afghans, who are fully responsible for securing their country.

But as I've said before, while America's combat mission in Afghanistan may be over, our commitment to Afghanistan and its people endures. As Commander in Chief, I will not allow Afghanistan to be used as safe haven for terrorists to attack our Nation again. Our forces therefore remain engaged in two narrow, but critical, missions: training Afghan forces and supporting counterterrorism operations against the remnants of Al Qaida. Of course, compared to the 100,000 troops we once had in Afghanistan, today fewer than 10,000 remain, in support of these very focused missions.

I meet regularly with my national security team, including commanders in Afghanistan, to continually assess, honestly, the situation on the ground, to determine where our strategy is working and where we may need greater flexibility. I have insisted consistently that our strategy focus on the development of a sustainable Afghan capacity and self-sufficiency. And when we've needed additional forces to advance that goal or we've needed to make adjustments in terms of our timetables, then we've made those adjustments. Today I want to update the American people on our efforts.

Since taking the lead for security earlier this year, Afghan forces have continued to step up. This has been the first fighting season where Afghans have largely been on their own. And they are fighting for their country bravely and tenaciously. Afghan forces continue to hold most urban areas. And when the Taliban has made gains, as is—as in Kunduz, Afghan forces backed by coalition support have been able to push them back. This has come at a very heavy price. This year alone, thousands of Afghan troops and police have lost their lives, as have many Afghan civilians.

At the same time, Afghan forces are still not as strong as they need to be. They are developing critical capabilities: intelligence, logistics, aviation, command and control. And meanwhile, the Taliban has made gains, particularly in rural areas, and can still launch deadly attacks in cities, including Kabul. Much of this was predictable. We understood that as we transitioned, that the Taliban would try to exploit some of our movements out of particular areas and that it would take time for Afghan security forces to strengthen. Pressure from Pakistan has resulted in more Al Qaida coming into Afghanistan, and we've seen the emergence of an ISIL presence. The bottom line is, in key areas of the country, the security situation is still very fragile, and in some places, there is risk of deterioration.

Fortunately, in President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah, there is a national unity Government that supports a strong partnership with the United States. During their visit earlier this year, President Ghani and I agreed to continue our counterterrorism cooperation, and he has asked for continued support as Afghan forces grow stronger.

Following consultations with my entire national security team, as well as our international partners and Members of Congress, President Ghani, and Chief Executive Abdullah, I'm therefore announcing the following steps, which I am convinced offer the best possibility for lasting progress in Afghanistan.

First, I've decided to maintain our current posture of 9,800 troops in Afghanistan through most of next year, 2016. Their mission will not change. Our troops will continue to pursue those two narrow tasks that I outlined earlier: training Afghan forces and going after Al Qaida. But maintaining our current posture through most of next year, rather than a more rapid drawdown, will allow us to sustain our efforts to train and assist Afghan forces as they grow stronger, not only during this fighting season, but into the next one.

Second, I have decided that instead of going down to a normal Embassy presence in Kabul by the end of 2016, we will maintain 5,500 troops at a small number of bases, including at Bagram, Jalalabad in the east, and Kandahar in the south.

Again, the mission will not change. Our troops will focus on training Afghans and counterterrorism operations. But these bases will give us the presence and the reach our forces require to achieve their mission. In this sense, Afghanistan is a key piece of the network of counterterrorism partnerships that we need, from South Asia to Africa, to deal more broadly with terrorist threats quickly and prevent attacks against our homeland.

Third, we will work with allies and partners to align the steps I am announcing today with their own presence in Afghanistan after 2016. In Afghanistan, we are part of a 42-nation coalition, and our NATO allies and partners can continue to play an indispensable role in helping Afghanistan strengthen its security forces, including respect for human rights.

And finally, because governance and development remain the foundation for stability and progress in Afghanistan, we will continue to support President Ghani and the national unity Government as they pursue critical reforms. New provincial Governors have been appointed, and President Ghani is working to combat corruption, strengthen institutions, and uphold rule of law. As I told President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah yesterday, efforts that deliver progress and justice for the Afghan people will continue to have the strong support of the United States. And we cannot separate the importance of governance with the issues of security. The more effective these reforms

happen, the better off the security situation is going to be.

We also discussed American support of an Afghan-led reconciliation process. By now it should be clear to the Taliban and all who oppose Afghanistan's progress the only real way to achieve the full drawdown of U.S. and foreign troops from Afghanistan is through a lasting political settlement with the Afghan Government. And likewise, sanctuaries for the Taliban and other terrorists must end. And next week, I'll host Prime Minister Sharif of Pakistan, and I will continue to urge all parties in the region to press the Taliban to return to peace talks and to do their part in pursuit of the peace that Afghans deserve.

In closing, I want to speak directly to those whose lives are most directly affected by the decisions I'm announcing today. To the Afghan people, who have suffered so much: Americans' commitment to you and to a secure, stable, and unified Afghanistan, that remains firm. Our two nations have forged a strategic partnership for the long term. And as you defend and build your country, today is a reminder that the United States keeps our commitments.

And to our men and women in uniform: I know that this means that some of you will rotate back into Afghanistan. With the end of our combat mission, this is not like 2010, when nearly 500 Americans were killed and many more were injured. But still, Afghanistan remains dangerous; 25 brave Americans have given their lives there this year.

I do not send you into harm's way lightly. It's the most solemn decision that I make. I know the wages of war in the wounded warriors I visit in the hospital and in the grief of Gold Star families. But as your Commander in Chief, I believe this mission is vital to our national security interests in preventing terrorist attacks against our citizens and our Nation.

And to the American people: I know that many of you have grown weary of this conflict. As you are well aware, I do not support the idea of endless war, and I have repeatedly argued against marching into open-ended military conflicts that do not serve our core security interests.

Yet, given what's at stake in Afghanistan and the opportunity for a stable and committed ally that can partner with us in preventing the emergence of future threats and the fact that we have an international coalition, I am firmly convinced that we should make this extra effort. In the Afghan Government, we have a serious partner who wants our help. And the majority of the Afghan people share our goals. We have a bilateral security agreement to guide our cooperation. And every single day, Afghan forces are out there fighting and dying to protect their country. They're not looking for us to do it for them.

I'm speaking of the Afghan army cadet who grew up seeing bombings and attacks on innocent civilians who said, "Because of this, I took the decision to join the army, to try and save innocent people's lives." Or the police officer training to defuse explosives. "I know it's dangerous work," he says, but "I have always had a dream of wearing the uniform of Afghanistan, serving my people and defending my country."

Or the Afghan commando, a hardened veteran of many missions, who said, "If I start telling you the stories of my life, I might start crying." He serves, he said, because "the faster we bring peace, the faster we can bring education, and the stronger our unity will grow. Only if these things happen will Afghanistan be able to stand up for itself."

My fellow Americans, after so many years of war, Afghanistan will not be a perfect place. It's a poor country that will have to work hard on its development. There will continue to be contested areas. But Afghans like these are standing up for their country. If they were to fail, it would endanger the security of us all. And we've made an enormous investment in a stable Afghanistan. Afghans are making difficult, but genuine, progress. This modest, but meaningful, extension of our presence—while sticking to our current, narrow missions—can make a real difference. It's the right thing to do.

May God bless our troops and all who keep us safe. And may God continue to bless the United States of America.

The President's Afghanistan Policy

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us how disappointing this decision is for you? Is this a—can you tell us how disappointing this decision is for you?

The President. This decision is not disappointing. Continually, my goal has been to make sure that we give every opportunity for Afghanistan to succeed while we're still making sure that we're meeting our core missions.

And as I've continually said, my approach is to assess the situation on the ground, figure out what's working, figure out what's not working, make adjustments where necessary. This isn't the first time those adjustments have been made; this won't probably be the last.

What I'm encouraged by is the fact that we have a Government that is serious about trying to deliver security and the prospects of a better life for the Afghan people. We have a clear majority of the Afghans who want to partner with us and the international community to achieve those goals. We have a bilateral security arrangement that ensures that our troops can operate in ways that protect them while still achieving their mission. And we've always known that we had to maintain a counterterrorism operation in that region in order to tamp down any reemergence of active Al Qaida networks or other networks that might do us harm.

So this is consistent with the overall vision that we've had. And frankly, we anticipated, as we were drawing down troops, that there would be times where we might need to slow things down or fill gaps in Afghan capacity. And this is a reflection of that. And it's a dangerous area.

So part of what we're constantly trying to balance is making sure that Afghans are out there, they're doing what they need to do, but that we are giving them a chance to succeed and that we're making sure that our force posture in the area for conducting those narrow missions that we need to conduct, we can do so relatively safely. There are still risks involved, but force protection, the ability of our Embassies to operate effectively, those things all factor in.

And so we've got to constantly review these approaches. The important thing I want to emphasize, though, is, is that the nature of the mission has not changed. And the cessation of our combat role has not changed.

Now, the 25 military and civilians who were killed last year, that always weighs on my mind. And 25 deaths are 25 too many, particularly for the families of the fallen. But understand, relative to what was involved when we were in an active combat role and actively engaged in war in Afghanistan was a different, very different scenario.

So here, you have a situation where we have clarity about what our mission is. We've got a partner who wants to work with us. We're going to continually make adjustments to ensure that we give the best possibilities for success. And I suspect that we will continue to evaluate this going forward, as will the next President. And as conditions improve, we'll be in a position to make further adjustments.

But I'm absolutely confident this is the right thing to do. And I'm not disappointed because my view has always been, how do we achieve our goals while minimizing the strain and exposure on our men and women in uniform and make sure that we are constantly encouraging and sending a message to the Afghan people, this is their country, and they've got to defend it? But we're going to be a steady partner for them.

Okay? Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:04 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Abdul Saboor and Wahidullah Zazai, trainee cadets, Afghan National Army; and Jan Ali, explosive ordnance disposal technician trainee, Afghan National Police. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks at a Hispanic Heritage Month Reception
October 15, 2015

The President. Buenas tardes. Bienvenidos a la Casa Blanca! Everybody, please give Diana a big round of applause for sharing your inspiring story. She did great. We are so very proud of her and all the young people who are here today. I also want to recognize the Cuban Ambassador to the United States, Ambassador José Cabañas.

And give it up for the Buena Vista Social Club! It's wonderful to have you here. I was explaining to them that when the documentary about the Buena Vista Social Club came out—I was told it was around 1998—I bought a CD. Now, for those of you who are too young to remember—[*laughter*]—it was this round thing. You had to slide it—[*laughter*].

Vice President Joe Biden. I remember records. [*Laughter*]

The President. So we are thrilled to have them here.

For nearly two decades, this group has been a symbol of the strong bonds between the American and Cuban people, bonds of friendship and culture and, of course, music. So I just hope they enjoy their stay. And I hope that I look as good as they do in a few years. [*Laughter*]

So today we're here not just to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, but also to celebrate the 25th anniversary of a powerful vehicle for progress: the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics.

Here's how the initiative came about. Back in the late 1980s, it was already clear that Hispanics were on pace to become America's largest minority group. But at the time, opportunity for Latinos wasn't growing as quickly. Roughly half of Latino adults didn't have a high school diploma. Nearly one in three Hispanic students were dropping out of high school. And Latinos didn't have a voice in Washington to match their growing share of America.

So one man, Raul Yzaguirre, set out to change that. Raul is right here; he's hiding in the corner. At the time, Raul was president of the National Council of La Raza. And he saw what was happening with our Latino youth. He believed that smarter Federal policy could make a difference. So Raul went straight to the White House, asked for a Federal commitment to make sure that the needs of Hispanics were being met.

Initially, his plans were rebuffed. It didn't stop him; he just started working harder. Long before you could reach millions of people with a single tweet—[*laughter*]—Raul was using the phone. [*Laughter*] For those of you who don't remember, this was not like the thing you take pictures with—[*laughter*]—and it was shape like this. You had to—[*laughter*]. You had to dial. And so Raul picked up the phone, and he built a coalition.

[*At this point, a telephone rang.*]

The President. There you go. [*Laughter*] That's called a ring. [*Laughter*]

So he built a coalition of Hispanic organizations and educational allies and individuals all across the country. They took out advertisements in newspapers. They rallied Members of Congress. They stuffed thousands of envelopes in a letter-writing campaign.

And it worked. In 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed an Executive order establishing a Commission to support the achievement of Hispanic children and to help them—I'm quoting here—"take their rightful place at the American table of opportunity."

And in the years since, Presidents from both parties have renewed America's commitment to this initiative. We've seen the educational outcomes of Hispanic youth gain steam along with the prospects of Latinos as a whole.

So today, our country's high school graduation rate is at an alltime high, and it's powered in large part by dramatic gains among Hispanic students. The Hispanic high school dropout rate is down by more than 60 percent since the early nineties, since Raul was working. The portion of Hispanic children in preschool is up by about 50 percent. The percentage with a

bachelor's degree has nearly doubled. Math and reading scores have improved dramatically over the last decade.

And so this is truly an American story. It's the kind of progress that we need to celebrate: the story of hard-working people, strong advocacy, coming together, lifting up not only the fortunes of a people, but ultimately, the entire country's fortunes. It's bending the arc of history to be fairer and more just.

Now, obviously, we've still got more work to do. Hispanic students continue to lag behind most of their peers when it comes to graduating from high school, graduating from college. More than half of 3- and 4-year-old Latinos are not yet enrolled in early learning programs. And while 1 in 4 public school students are Hispanic, fewer than 1 in 12 of their teachers are. So we've got a lot of work that we still have to do to make sure that every child in this country gets a fair shot at a world-class education. We've got to make sure that DREAMers like Diana don't have to live in fear that somehow this country that they love, the only country that they know, somehow will turn its back on them.

And so these are the challenges that the White House initiative has taken on during my administration. I want to recognize the work of our outstanding Chair for the past 5 years, Dr. Eduardo Padrón. And it's not as if he is not busy enough, heading up one of the most important community colleges in the country. I want to thank all his fellow Commissioners who have worked hard to ensure that our efforts are reaching Latino students. Last fall, under the leadership of Executive Director Alejandra Ceja, the initiative has been rallying even more support around the country to keep us moving forward. Today, by the way, I'm proud to announce more than 150 private and public sector commitments totaling more than $335 million on behalf of America's kids.

So, just to give you a couple of examples, Boys and Girls Clubs of America is ramping up family engagement and STEM education. Univision and Opening Doors projects are reaching out to parents to help prepare children for school at the earliest age. So that's just an example of some of the great contributions that are being made.

And that's what this is all about: everybody doing their part to make sure the next generation does even better than we do. That's how we've always made this country great, not by building walls—[*laughter*]—but by tearing down barriers to opportunity; not by trying to divide us, but by trying to build community; not by telling people to go back where they came from, because this would be a really empty country if that's what happened—[*laughter*]—but by making sure everybody has got a "rightful place" at the table.

So that's the story of America: the story of the hunger and the desire to make us live up to our expectations, the high expectations set forth in our founding documents. It's people like Raul who dedicate their lives to raising hopes of those who had been overlooked for too long. It's people like Cecilia Muñoz, who, 25 years ago, Cecilia was stuffing envelopes for Raul's campaign to give more people a voice at the White House. And today, she's helping to run the White House as one of my top Senior Advisers.

So—and America is a generation of young people like Diana, who dream big and who hope deeply, and whose future, like America's, is not yet written, but is as bright as they are willing to make it.

So that's always been our trajectory as Americans—moving forward; build each other up, not tear each other down. We've come together to make this country more perfect for our kids and for those who come after us. That's our American heritage as well are our Hispanic heritage. That's what we celebrate this month.

And thank you, all of you, for the great work you're doing on our behalf. All right? Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:45 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Diana Calderon, student, Yorktown High School in Arlington, VA, who introduced the President; former U.S. Ambassador to the Dominican Republic Raul H. Yzaguirre; and Eduardo J. Padrón, president, Miami Dade College.

The President's News Conference With President Park Geun-hye of South Korea

October 16, 2015

President Obama. Please be seated. *Annyong haseyo*. [*Laughter*] Good afternoon.

Last year in Seoul, President Park welcomed me to the Blue House. Today it's a pleasure to welcome her back to the White House. Madam President, during your last visit here, you addressed a joint session of Congress, which is an honor that's reserved for America's closest friends. You noted that the founding document of both of our countries—our Declaration of Independence and your Constitution—enshrine our commitment to our people with the same words, to their "pursuit of happiness."

For more than six decades, Americans and Koreans have stood shoulder to shoulder in that pursuit. And, Madam President, once again, your time here includes a visit to our Korean War Veterans Memorial. We are very grateful for that. It's a reminder that our people have fought and bled and died for one another's freedom. And I know your gestures mean a great deal to the American people and especially to our proud Korean war veterans.

In recent years, President Park and I have worked together to strengthen our alliance for the future, and today I want to reaffirm that the commitment of the United States to the defense and security of the Republic of Korea will never waver. Our alliance remains a linchpin of peace and security, not just on the Korean Peninsula, but across the region. And so South Korea plays a central role in America's rebalance to the Asia-Pacific. And we continued that work today.

As we agreed in Seoul last year, our militaries are investing in shared capabilities, including the technologies and missile defenses that allow our forces to operate together effectively. We want to ensure that our Korean allies have the capabilities that are needed to take on greater responsibility for the defense of the peninsula and the eventual transfer of operational control of the alliance. And we're determined to maintain our readiness against any threat.

Madam President, I want to commend you and the people of South Korea for the resolve that you displayed this summer following North Korea's reckless actions in the DMZ that wounded two of your soldiers. North Korea was reminded that any provocation or aggression will be met by a strong, united response by South Korea and the United States.

Likewise, Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programs have achieved nothing except to deepen North Korea's isolation. Today President Park and I are reaffirming that our nations will never accept North Korea as a nuclear weapons state. We will continue to insist that Pyongyang must abide by its obligations on the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the peninsula in a peaceful manner. And given the horrific treatment of the North Korean people by their Government, our two nations will continue to expose abuses and call for accountability for human rights violations.

At the same time, we do support President Park's efforts to improve relations between South and North Korea. As my administration has shown with Iran and with Cuba, we are also prepared to engage nations with which we've had troubled histories. But Pyongyang needs to understand that it will not achieve the economic development it seeks so long as it clings to nuclear weapons. In contrast, President Park has articulated a better vision—a unified Korea free from the fear of war and nuclear weapons—and that's a vision that we very much support.

Beyond the peninsula, President Park shared her proposal—the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperative—Cooperation Initiative—to build greater cooperation among the countries of the region, and we welcome those efforts. President Park and I met with Prime Minister Abe of Japan last year to address shared challenges. And the trilateral summit that President Park will host this month can be

another step forward in building positive relations between South Korea, Japan, and China.

With respect to trade, we reviewed the first 3 years of our KORUS trade agreement. Bilateral trade is up, including exports of American autos. We do still have work to do, and I conveyed that when the issues of implementing KORUS have arisen, they have been resolved, but we need to resolve them quickly. And President Park discussed the regulatory reforms that she's pursuing. Those are reforms that we welcome.

And finally, I'm pleased that our alliance is increasingly a global one. South Korea is not just an important player in the region, it's increasingly an important player on the world stage. South Korea remains a partner in development, in Afghanistan, a member of the coalition against ISIL, a generous donor of humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees. And now we're going even further, expanding our cooperation to some new frontiers.

For example, given the increasing cyber threats to both our nations, including from the D.P.R.K., we're stepping up our efforts to strengthen our cyber defenses and coordinating at the highest levels—the White House and the Blue House—making sure that we're in sync in dealing with that challenge.

In the fight against climate change, we're accelerating our investments in clean energy. Our new civil nuclear agreement reflects our shared commitment to the safe use of nuclear power, which is a low-carbon energy source. And I want to commend South Korea for announcing its post-2020 target to limit carbon emissions through its national cap-and-trade system. As we head into the Paris conference, South Korean leadership can be an example for other nations around the world.

And finally, we're expanding our cooperation to promote health and global development. And having already worked together against Ebola, South Korea has stepped up as a true leader in advancing global health security. Our development agencies will partner to reduce poverty and encourage sustainable development in Southeast Asia. And both our countries are standing together to promote education and health for girls around the world: our "Let Girls Learn" campaign and South Korea's Better Life for Girls initiative.

So, Madam President, thank you once again for your partnership, your leadership, and your friendship. I believe that we've shown again today that our unbreakable alliance is not just a foundation for security in the Korean Peninsula and in the Asia-Pacific region. More and more, our alliance is helping people around the world in their own pursuit of happiness, the security and prosperity and dignity that they seek for their families and for their nations.

Madam President.

President Park. Mr. President, thank you very much for your remarks. I also thank you and the American people for the very warm welcome you've extended to me throughout my visit.

Now, in today's summit, you and I discussed not only the Korea-U.S. alliance, but also issues surrounding the Korean Peninsula, the Northeast Asia, and a shared global agenda. During the past 2½ years, we've been able to creatively resolve such sensitive issues as a conditions-based transition of operational control and the revision, after 42 years, of the nuclear cooperation agreement, which evidences that the Korea-U.S. alliance is stronger than ever.

Our alliance is now moving beyond a security alliance and an economic alliance and evolving into a comprehensive global alliance. The biggest threat to peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia is North Korean provocation and advancement of North Korea's nuclear capabilities. And President Obama and I shared recognition in many aspects of this issue.

First, to deter any strategic provocation by the North, Korea and the U.S. will continue to strengthen coordinated efforts with the international community, including China, Russia, and Japan. And to this end, we will try to fully utilize the various regional and multilateral gatherings that are to take place.

Second, with a sense of urgency and firm commitment, we have agreed to strengthen diplomatic efforts to resolve the North Korean nuclear problem. On the basis of Korea-U.S.-Japan

cooperation, we will strengthen coordination among the other five parties, while Korea and the United States will deepen consultations with other countries, including China.

Third, should North Korea demonstrate a genuine willingness towards denuclearization, we reaffirm that Korea and the U.S., along with the rest of the international community, stand ready to extend cooperative measures to the North.

In our discussions, we looked beyond today, the current—we looked beyond the current pressing issues of the Korean Peninsula and engaged in deeper discussions about the future of the Korean Peninsula. With regard to the changing situation in the Korean Peninsula and in the process of peaceful reunification, we will continue to pursue mutually coordinated policies on North Korea. At the same time, to create conditions conducive to peaceful reunification, we will also deepen high-level strategic consultations between Korea and the U.S.

I would also like to thank President Obama for his support for the Korean Government's ideas on peaceful reunification. Today we adopted a joint statement on North Korea that contains our shared recognition on these related issues.

The Korea-U.S. alliance is the linchpin of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific. And there exists a synergy between President Obama's rebalancing of policy in the Asia-Pacific and our Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative, or NAPCI. And I would like to thank President Obama for his warm words of welcome and strong support for NAPCI. In late October, the second high-level NAPCI forum will be held in Seoul, and I hope that Korea and the United States will continue to engage in close cooperation in that forum and beyond.

President Obama also recognized Korea's initiative in reviving Korea-Japan-China trilateral talks that had been on hold for the past 3½ years. And he also expressed his high hopes for the Korea-Japan-China summit that will be held in 2 weeks' time.

We also shared the recognition that such meetings may meaningfully contribute to the improvement of bilateral relations in our region. President Obama affirmed that Korea-U.S. relations and Korea-China relations can be compatible and supported Korea's policies toward China. The recent summit meetings between Korea and China, the U.S. and China, and now Korea and the U.S. have served to build consensus regarding North Korea and its nuclear program, and we believe that this will play a positive role in ensuring peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and throughout Northeast Asia.

In dealing with the North Korean nuclear problem, we will also seek to strengthen cooperation between Korea, U.S., and Japan. I believe that strengthening three-way dialogue between Korea, the U.S., and Japan, and Korea, Japan, and China, will enable us to open new channels for stronger regional cooperation.

Regional peace and stability becomes stronger when countries within the region build closer ties of mutual economic dependency. In this regard, I would like to congratulate President Obama for the successful conclusion of TPP negotiations. Korea and the U.S. already have an FTA with very high standards. And in this respect, I believe that we make natural partners in terms of the TPP. Since TPP negotiations have now been concluded, we will be engaging in closer cooperation with regard to Korea's possible participation in the TPP.

Today's meeting was particularly meaningful in that it provides impetus to our efforts to open new frontiers of cooperation within the Korea-U.S. alliance and strengthens our global partnership. Korea and the United States will focus first on health security, cybersecurity, space and Arctic cooperation, which are gaining the spotlight in this 21st century.

In the realm of space, particularly, we will work to quickly conclude talks on the Korea-U.S. agreement on space cooperation to establish an institutional foundation for such cooperation. In the cyber world too, in order to enhance common response capabilities against cyber attacks, we've agreed to establish a hotline between the White House and the Blue House for cyber cooperation.

On global issues, President Obama and I, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, have agreed to strengthen cooperation on climate change, development cooperation, U.N. peacekeeping operations, nuclear security, humanitarian aid for refugees, violent extremism, and other urgent global issues.

Today's summit served as an opportunity to set forth a clear vision and strategy for the future of the Korea-U.S. alliance. In forging a new Korean Peninsula, a new Northeast Asia, and a new world, I'm confident that the Korea-U.S. alliance will continue to evolve into a comprehensive strategic alliance.

President Obama. All right, we're going to take a couple of questions. We'll start with Michelle Kosinski, CNN.

2016 Presidential Election/Israel/Arab-Israeli Peace Process/North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Program

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. On 2016, now that we've seen the Democratic candidates in their first debate and how they did—and maybe you can share some of your thoughts on how much you watched of that—[*laughter*]—do you feel like the window now has closed on the Vice President entering the race? And if you don't feel that it's closed, do you feel that he, in a sense, owes it to fellow Democrats to get in very soon?

And also, on Israel, we heard Secretary Kerry say that one of the roots of what's going on there now is frustration over settlement activity. Do you feel like that is a root cause of the violence? And do you feel like President Abbas has a responsibility to condemn attacks and try to stop them?

And, President Park, welcome. As you know, the U.S. has reached this deal now with Iran over its nuclear program. I'm not sure if I should start over—were you able to hear that, President Park? As you know, the U.S. has reached a deal now with Iran over its nuclear program, but how would you feel if that were North Korea? Would you welcome attempts for such a deal, and do you feel like you would ever trust North Korea to abide by such an agreement? Thank you.

President Obama. Good. The Democratic debate was taking place at the same time as some ball games—[*laughter*]—so there was a little bit of clicking back and forth. I'm not going to comment on what Joe is doing or not doing. I think you can direct those questions to my very able Vice President.

The one observation I'll make about the Democratic debate was that those are all some very fine people. They share a belief in an economy that is working for everybody and not just the few. They share a belief that America has to project strength around the world by maintaining the finest military, but also by making sure that we've got a strong economy back home, that we're employing diplomacy and working with other nations wherever possible to solve big problems, like climate change.

So what was interesting to me was the degree to which—although there are some very real differences among the candidates, and I'm sure those will emerge, and they—there may be for each candidate some differences with my administration—overall, they very much—we very much share a vision of an economy that works for everybody and effective pursuit of America's national security through all the tools that are available to us. And I was very impressed with all of them, and I know them personally. And they're good people.

Beyond that, I think it's up to the American people to decide. And so I will have a vote like everybody else, as a citizen. And that ballot is private, and I don't have to share my views about that right now because I think it's important for the American people to make up their own decision.

Q. So you don't think it's too late for the Vice President to get in?

President Obama. I think that the Vice President, like every other candidate, makes their own decisions about these issues, and they'll have to figure out whether it makes sense for them.

With respect to Israel, obviously, we're very concerned about the outbreak of violence that

initially is centered on Jerusalem, but we always are concerned about the spread of violence elsewhere.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms violence directed against innocent people and believe that Israel has a right to maintain basic law and order and protect its citizens from knife attacks and violence on the streets.

We also believe that it's important for both Prime Minister Netanyahu and Israeli elected officials and President Abbas and other people in positions of power to try to tamp down rhetoric that may feed violence or anger or misunderstanding and try to get all people in Israel and in the West Bank to recognize that this kind of random violence isn't going to result in anything other than more hardship and more insecurity.

And I don't think that it's—I don't think we can wait for all the issues that exist between Israelis and Palestinians to be settled in order for us to try to tamp down the violence right now. I think my views are well known that, over time, the only way that Israel is going to be truly secure and the only way that the Palestinians are going to be able to meet the aspirations of their people is if there are two states living side by side in peace and security.

Those talks, which Secretary Kerry put enormous effort in, and before that, a number of our envoys and Secretary Clinton put enormous effort in, have stalled. And I think it's going to be up to the parties—and we stand ready to assist—to see if they can restart a more constructive relationship. But in the meantime, right now everybody needs to focus on making sure that innocent people aren't being killed.

And even though you didn't ask me the question, I'm just going to horn in on the question that you asked President Park, because we actually discussed Iran and what it could teach us about the situation in North Korea.

These are both countries that have a long history of antagonizing—antagonism towards the United States, but we were prepared to have a serious conversation with the Iranians once they showed that they were serious about the possibility of giving up the pursuit of nuclear weapons. And I suspect President Park agrees with me here that, at the point where Pyongyang says, "We're interested in seeing relief from sanctions and improved relations, and we are prepared to have a serious conversation about denuclearization," it's—I think it's fair to say we'll be right there at the table.

Now, whether even if they made that gesture, they would then be willing to subject themselves to the kind of rigorous verification regimes that we've set up with Iran, particularly given their past violations of agreements, that's a separate question. But we haven't even gotten to that point yet because there's been no indication on the part of the North Koreans, as there was with the Iranians, that they could foresee a future in which they did not possess or were not pursuing nuclear weapons.

Q. So, just to be completely clear, do you agree with Secretary Kerry on the role of settlements leading to the violence, or certainly——

President Obama. I don't think that's what Secretary Kerry said. I think what Secretary Kerry said was, is that we have to end the violence, that Israel has a right to prevent its citizens from being subjected to random violence, that all parties have to lower the rhetoric, that the religious sites that are so important to three of the world's major religions inside of Jerusalem need to be respected, and that the status quo that allowed shared worship in and around these spaces needed to be maintained.

And then, I think as an addition to those statements, what Secretary Kerry said was, is that the atmosphere in which there's so much tension and suspicion between Palestinians and Israelis obviously creates the potential for more misunderstanding and triggers. And that's something that has been true now for decades. And if we can make progress there, obviously, it's going to help, but there's not a direct causation here. And what we do need to make sure of is that we're focusing right now on ensuring that innocent people aren't being killed.

President Park. With regard to the Iranian agreement and whether it could be applied to the North Korean situation, I think that was what the question was about. Now, if you look at the Iran negotiations and how it was con-

cluded, how you reached an agreement, we saw the United States and the U.S. leadership lead the whole process, and we had other countries that also made concerted efforts. We had international efforts that came together that made this possible, and I think that's a very important lesson that we need to take away from this.

Now, if you look at the North Korean nuclear problem, we do have international cooperation in that area. We have China and Russia that are also all vehemently against North Korean nuclear capabilities. So we do have some international cooperation there. But the difference between Iran and North Korea might be something that President Obama just said; I totally agree with him. What's important here is that you need to have this genuine willingness, on the part of North Korea, that they will give up nuclear capabilities. This might not be a perfect example, but you can take a horse to the trough, but you can't make it drink water, there is a saying.

So it's the same thing here. North Korea has to come to its own conclusion that it is genuinely willing to give up nuclear capabilities and become a full-fledged member of the international society. They need to have that. If they don't have that, then even if we have international concerted efforts, then we won't see a conclusion to these negotiations or talks like we saw with Iran. So that's a big difference that I see here.

President Obama. Who do you want to call on, Madam President? They all seem very capable.

President Obama's Relationship With President Park/South Korea-U.S. Relations

Q. I am—[*inaudible*]—Daily. Now, the Korean Peninsula trust-building process has been the basis of the Korean Government efforts to improve inter-Korean relations. But despite these efforts, North Korea has really not changed its attitude towards developing nuclear missile capabilities. Now, in the second half of your term in office, how do you plan on steering inter-Korean ties?

And one more. Now, from your visit to China in September, we have been seeing you say that you want to see unification of the Koreas. Do you really think that this will be possible during your term in office?

And I have a question for both of you, actually, finally. In Korea, they say that you see each other often and you start to grow fond of each other. Now, this is your fourth time meeting as a summit meeting, and you also see each other a lot at multilateral talks. So I just want to ask, have you grown closer?

President Park. Now, let me ask the last—answer the last question first. Then, yes. The answer is yes for me. So let me continue with my answers to your question.

Now, the Korean Peninsula trust-building process, basically, we have this principle: Now, we will be very sternly and decisively dealing with any provocations, but we're also leaving the door open for a dialogue, and we'll continue to make efforts to build trust. So this is the basic principle, and this is the basic underlying foundation of all our North Korean policies.

In August, there was a North Korean provocation in the demilitarized zone, and we stuck to this principle and applied it to the situation. And we were very firmly responding to the situation, and as a result, we were able to reach the August 25 agreement between the two Koreas.

So we had this vicious cycle where North Korea kept on provoking us, and then we just rewarded it, and it went on and on. And we want to stop this. And we are very clear that our North Korean policy line will not change just because North Korea continues to provoke and threaten us.

Now, the Korean Government will try to smoothly implement the August 25 agreement. And we seek to put into place concrete measures for reconciliation and cooperation in an effort to maintain this momentum for improved inter-Korean ties.

Now, in the past, some people—you might have thought that, well, if you just let things—some things slide, won't you get along better? But if you look at the results of that attitude, they really weren't very good. We need a

principled approach, and this principled approach might make it difficult for the time being—the immediate time being—but that is where improved relationships will actually start. That is my belief.

Now, reunification is something that no one can really predict. Now, in the summit earlier too, we talked about Germany and how the Chancellor Kohl said that German reunification would happen in 10 years' time, but then 3 days later, the Berlin Wall came falling down. So it's really something that's very unpredictable. But no matter when it happens, for us, we need to be prepared. I think that is the most important point for us. So, for any circumstances, we need to be prepared. And we are making efforts in this regard.

Now, we do have reunification preparation committee that are looking into the practical aspects of reunification, how we prepare for it. But reunification is actually not just between South and North Korea, it also affects the greater international community. So we need to also look at our neighboring countries, and we need to create an environment throughout the world where there is consensus that people agree that, yes, reunification is needed and this will be good for the region, for peace and prosperity. And we need to be able to tell our neighbors and the greater world that reunification is a good thing for the region and the world. And we will continue to make efforts in this regard as well.

President Obama. I was impressed the first time I met with President Park and just have become more and more impressed with her leadership, the clarity of her vision. And she has not only been a great partner to us, but I think has helped to continue Korea's broader role in global affairs. And so I'm very proud to be working with her, and I think our strong relationship is also a reflection of the extraordinary friendship and close relationship between the American people and the Korean people.

Carol Lee [Wall Street Journal]. There you are.

Iran/Syria/Russia/2016 Presidential Election/Trans-Pacific Partnership

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Now that your administration has said that Iran very clearly violated a U.N. Security Council resolution with its recent missile test, what are the consequences for that going to be? Would you be able to accept additional U.S. sanctions against Iran? And given this missile test and their—Iran's actions in Syria, how concerned are you that they're being this aggressive before they've even gotten the billions of dollars that they're supposed to get under the nuclear deal?

And if I could quickly ask you if you could comment on the deal that the U.S. and Russian militaries have reached. Does this mean that things—you—Russia and the U.S. are going to be at cross-purposes in Syria going forward?

And if you could, are you disappointed that Secretary Clinton opposes your trade deal, particularly given that your administration has not released the final draft?

And, President Park, you recently appeared in Beijing with the leaders of Russia and China. What message were you trying to send to the U.S. with that appearance?

President Obama. All right, I've got to write these down, Carol. Iran.

Q. Iran.

President Obama. What was the second one?

Q. Russia, military.

President Obama. Russian military.

Q. Hillary.

President Obama. And Hillary and—got them. Whew! [*Laughter*] All right, let's see if I can take these in turn.

With respect to Iran, Iran has often violated some of the prohibitions surrounding missile testing. And our position with respect to U.N. resolutions, prohibitions, and potential sanctions are unchanged with respect to their—to missile programs.

And this is something that I made very clear during the debate around Iran—the Iran nuclear deal: The Iran nuclear deal solves a specific problem, which is making sure that they don't possess a nuclear weapon. And it's our

best way to do that. It does not fully resolve the wide range of issues where we've got a big difference. And so we are going to have to continue to put pressure on them through the international community and, where we have bilateral channels, through bilateral channels to indicate to them that there are costs to bad behavior in the region and around the world. But we're not going to do that more effectively if they're also on a separate track pursuing a nuclear weapon.

With respect to their actions in Syria, as I've said before, they're just doing more of what they have been doing for the last 5 years, as is Russia. And it's an indication that their basic premise, their basic theory of how to solve Syria has not worked and will not work.

I mean, their preference originally was, we will simply send arms and money to Asad, and he will be able to clamp down on dissent. And when that didn't work, they directed Hizballah to come in and prop them up and sent in some of their own military advisers. And that did not work. And now the Russians have come in, and Iran is going to send more people in. But it's also not going to work because they are trying to support a regime that in the eyes of the overwhelming majority of the Syrian people is not legitimate.

And our goal is, even as we double down on going after ISIL, is to continue to cultivate relations with a moderate opposition that can serve as a transition to a new government inside of Syria, and that we continue to have a process of getting the Iranians, the Syrians, and all—the Iranians, the Russians, the Turks, the Gulf countries, and all the other interested parties to sit down and recognize we've got to have a political transition if we want to end the humanitarian crisis and save the structure of a unified Syrian state.

With respect to Russia, the only understanding that we've arrived at is, how do we deconflict in the event that our planes and their planes might be occupying similar space over Syrian skies? So, in that sense, we've arrived at an understanding and some channels for communications. Where we will continue to differ is in the basic set of principles and strategies we're pursuing inside of Syria.

President Putin believes that if he continues to do what he's been doing over the last 5 years—and that is, prop up the Asad regime—that the problem will be solved. Our belief is, is that we have to go after ISIL and violent extremist groups. But the magnet that the civil war there is serving in bringing in foreign fighters and recruiting people to this extremist cause will only go away if we're able to get a political track and a legitimate, inclusive Government inside of Syria.

So there's no meeting of the minds in terms of strategy. But my hope is, is that as we continue to have these conversations, and as I suspect Russia starts realizing that they're not going to be able to bomb their way to a peaceful situation inside of Syria, that we're—we'll be able to make progress on that front.

And with respect to trade and how Hillary views trade, I'd have you direct questions to her. I mean, here's a general proposition, guys: During the course of what will be a long campaign, I probably won't be commenting on every single utterance or decision that the various candidates make, because I think that it is natural and proper for candidates to run on their own vision and their own platform.

And what's encouraging is the fact that I think everybody on that stage at the debate affirmed what I've said in the past, which is, we agree on 95 percent of stuff and on the basic vision of a country that is building out our middle class, is making sure that everybody who works hard gets a shot, that believes immigration strengthens us rather than weakens us, that believes that people should be treated fairly and equally. The vision of the Democratic Party that I've fought for is one that is broadly shared by all the candidates. There are going to be some areas where they differ at any given point.

Now, I'm happy to make the case once again for the trade agreement itself. And I hope, Carol, you take the time to read it because what you'll see is, is that it meets the promise that I made: the most progressive, highest standard trade agreement that we have ever

put forward that deals with chronic problems like child labor or forced labor and is enforceable; that makes sure we are upping our game in the Asia-Pacific region on the environment and is enforceable; that protects intellectual property that is the wellspring of innovation here in the United States; that makes sure that our businesses are treated fairly when they invest in other countries; that opens up markets.

Keep in mind, we have some of the lowest tariffs in the world already. So we're already seeing goods and services being sold by other countries here, and the countries that are part of TPP have significantly higher tariffs. For us to be able to get those lowered, I'll—just the example of Japan, where they slap on 10-, 20-, 30-, 40-percent taxes on some of our goods and services—for those to come down and, in the case of U.S. manufacturing goods, those tariffs being eliminated completely, that's a big deal.

So I'm sure that we'll continue this debate as we post the actual terms of the agreement and Congress has a chance to review it. I'm pretty confident I'll be able to persuade a whole lot of people, once they see the outlines of the deal, that it's the right thing to do.

And as President Park indicated, there's a geopolitical reason for us doing it as well. We want those of us who already have high standards to make sure everybody else does too. Because that's going to make our businesses more competitive, it's going to put our workers in a better position so that they're not undercut by low wages or forced labor; that their plants don't suddenly shut down because we've got environmental laws that other countries aren't following. It's the right thing to do.

Q. Can I ask you, are new U.S. sanctions an option for responding to——

President Obama. I think what we'll be doing is we'll review, as we have in the past, any violations of U.N. resolutions, and we'll deal with them much as we have in the past.

So what I've been very clear about from the outset is that, although we are eliminating—or suspending, effectively—sanctions related to the nuclear program, subject to snapback if we see violations there, that sanctions that are related to ballistic missiles, human rights violations, terrorism, those we will continue to enforce. And that's not just unilateral sanctions on our part. Our expectation is, is that there will be continued international consequences where U.N. resolutions are violated.

President Park. Well, that was a very long answer, and I kind of forgot the question that was asked to me. [*Laughter*]

President Obama. This is what happens when I get three or four questions. [*Laughter*]

President Park. Oh, yes. I think the question about my visit to Beijing and what kind of message that I delivered.

Now, I met with President Xi in China, and I also met with the leader—the leaders of Russia. And the North Korean nuclear issue in our region, in Northeast Asia, and even the world, it's a very large threat. And this is something that we need to make concerted efforts to resolve. And I had dialogue on that topic with them, and we also talked about the security threats and also the North Korean nuclear issue from the standpoint that from the South Korean—from the Korean Peninsula and throughout Eurasia, we all want to grow together. And there are so many possibilities there, but right in the middle, blocking our way, is North Korea.

And because of that, the growth potential of the whole of Asia and Europe is being damaged a lot because of North Korea's ambitions in terms of nuclear. So that was my message that I had for the leaders that I met in Beijing. And they agreed with me in terms of my remarks about North Korea's nuclear problems, and we all agreed that we needed to make efforts to resolve this issue.

South Korea-U.S. Relations/South Korea-China Relations/China-U.S. Relations

Q. I am from—[*inaudible*]. First, I have a question for President Obama. Within the United States, with regard to the Korea-U.S. alliance, there are some people who are concerned that there are some cracks. What do you see? And in this situation, President Park has visited the United States. What is the significance of her visit?

I also have a question for President Park. Now, through this visit, you have said that you would like to open new frontiers of cooperation, and I'd like to hear some details on that, please.

President Obama. Actually, I don't see any cracks in the relationship at all. I would argue that the U.S.-R.O.K. relationship is stronger than it's ever been, that the alliance is on firmer footing than it's ever been across the spectrum of issues—military, economic, people-to-people, scientific, development, global issues—that we have excellent relations with the Government. Our communications is strong. Our vision of a continued robust alliance that can deal with any contingency is not just given lip service to, but we invest in on an ongoing basis. Our vision of what we need to do to see improved relations with the D.P.R.K., we have similar outlooks. And so I actually feel very good about what where the relationship between the United States and Korea are.

I think what's interesting—and this might connect to the earlier question that Carol had—is, sometimes there's a perception that if President Park meets with President Xi, that that must cause a problem for us. Well, I—President Xi was in this room, eating my food. [*Laughter*] And we were toasting and having a lengthy conversation. We want South Korea to have a strong relationship with China, just as we want to have a strong relationship with China. We want to see China's peaceful rise. We want them to be cooperating with us in putting pressure on the D.P.R.K. We want to be working with them to uphold international norms and rules of the road. So there's no contradiction between the Republic of Korea having good relations with us, being a central part of our alliance and having good a relationship—good relations with China.

I think as I communicated to President Park, the only thing that we're going to continue to insist on is that we want China to abide by international norms and rules. And where they fail to do so, we expect the Republic of Korea to speak out on that, just as we do, because we think that both of our countries have benefited from the international norms and rules that have been in place since the end of World War II. And we don't want to see those rules of the road weakening or some countries taking advantage because they're larger. That's not good for anybody, including South Korea.

You—obviously, given the size of China right there on your doorstep, if they're able to act with impunity and ignore rules whenever they please, that's not going to be good for you, whether that's on economic issues or security issues.

So again, I think there we have a shared interest. And my hope is, is that as a consequence of the outreach that President Park has done, the outreach we do, the interactions that we have with Japan and resolving some of the historical challenges that exist there, that we can create in Northeast Asia the kind of cooperative, forward-looking relationship among all countries that will be good for our children and our grandchildren.

President Park. With the United States, we are looking to open new frontiers in cooperation and new horizons for cooperation as well. We're looking at climate change, infectious diseases, space exploration. There are some—those are just some of the topics that we talked about. These are global issues too. And in order to effectively respond to the needs with regard to these issues, I believe that we need a very close cooperation between Korea and the United States.

Now, these issues need our attention in terms of cutting-edge technologies and new industries that we need to develop, and only then will we be able to approach these issues and resolve them effectively. And in that respect, I think that we need to engage in cooperation to maybe develop—jointly develop technology in these areas. For example, we could have joint projects in smart grids or clean energy projects. And in the area of space, we have agreed to work together to quickly conclude a Korea-U.S. agreement for cooperation in space.

So, through such efforts, we have an economic alliance between Korea and the U.S. that was forged through the KORUS FTA. And we want to turn this into a high-value-added alliance that's ready for the future.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 2:10 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel; President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority; President Bashar al-Asad of Syria; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; and former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. President Park referred to former Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany. President Park spoke in Korean, and her remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Joint Statement by President Obama and President Park Geun-hye of South Korea on North Korea

October 16, 2015

On October 16, 2015, President Barack Obama of the United States of America and President Park Geun-hye of the Republic of Korea committed to the following.

The United States-Republic of Korea alliance remains committed to countering the threat to peace and security posed by North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs as well as other provocations. We will maintain our robust deterrence posture and continue to modernize our alliance and enhance our close collaboration to better respond to all forms of North Korean provocations.

The United States and the Republic of Korea share deep concern about the continued advancement of North Korea's UN-proscribed nuclear and missile capabilities and commit to address the North Korean nuclear problem with utmost urgency and determination.

We reaffirm our commitment to our common goal, shared by the international community, to achieve the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of North Korea in a peaceful manner. North Korea's continuing development of its nuclear and ballistic missile programs is an ongoing violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions and is contrary to North Korea's commitments under the 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. We strongly urge North Korea to immediately and fully comply with its international obligations and commitments.

We oppose any actions by North Korea that raise tensions or violate UN Security Council resolutions. In particular, if North Korea carries out a launch using ballistic missile technology or a nuclear test, it will face consequences, including seeking further significant measures by the UN Security Council. In this regard, we are committed to working with the international community to ensure the effective and transparent implementation of all UN Security Council resolutions, including sanctions measures, concerning North Korea, and we encourage all states to exercise strict vigilance against North Korea's prohibited activities.

The United States and the Republic of Korea maintain no hostile policy towards North Korea and remain open to dialogue with North Korea to achieve our shared goal of denuclearization. Recognizing the common interests of our Six-Party Talks partners in the denuclearization of North Korea, we will continue to strengthen our coordination with China and the other parties in order to bring North Korea, which has refused all offers of denuclearization dialogue, back to credible and meaningful talks as soon as possible.

We reaffirm that we will never accept North Korea as a nuclear-weapon state, and that its continued pursuit of nuclear weapons is incompatible with its economic development goals. Along with the rest of the international community, we stand ready to offer a brighter future to North Korea, if North Korea demonstrates a genuine willingness to completely abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programs, and agrees to abide by its international obligations and commitments.

The United States appreciates President Park's tireless efforts to improve inter-Korean relations, including through repeated

overtures to North Korea, and welcomes President Park's principled approach that resulted in a peaceful resolution of the August tensions. The United States will continue to strongly support her vision of a peacefully unified Korean Peninsula, as envisaged in her Dresden address. We will intensify high-level strategic consultations to create a favorable environment for the peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula.

The Republic of Korea and the United States join the international community in condemning the deplorable human rights situation in North Korea as documented in the 2014 UN Commission of Inquiry report. We look forward to supporting the work of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (Seoul). We remain dedicated to working with the international community to improve the human rights situation in North Korea and ensure accountability for human rights violations, as well as to improve the livelihood of the people in North Korea.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

The President's Weekly Address
October 17, 2015

Hi, everybody. Thirty years ago, there were 500,000 people behind bars in America. Today, there are 2.2 million. The United States is home to 5 percent of the world's population, but 25 percent of the world's prisoners. Every year, we spend $80 billion to keep people locked up.

Now, many of the folks in prison absolutely belong there. Our streets are safer thanks to the brave police officers and dedicated prosecutors who put violent criminals behind bars. But over the last few decades, we've also locked up more nonviolent offenders than ever before, for longer than ever before. That's one of the real reasons our prison population is so high.

Ever since I was a Senator, I've talked about how, in too many cases, our criminal justice system is a pipeline from underfunded schools to overcrowded jails. And we've taken steps to address it. We've invested in our schools to give at-risk young people a better shot to succeed. I've signed a bill reducing the 100-to-1 sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine. I've commuted the sentences of dozens of people sentenced under old drug laws we now recognize were unfair. The Department of Justice has gotten "Smart on Crime," refocusing efforts on the worst offenders and pursuing mandatory minimum sentences less frequently.

Still, much of our criminal justice system remains unfair. In recent years, more of our eyes have been opened to this truth, and we can't close them anymore. Good people of all political persuasions are eager to do something about it.

Over the next few weeks, I'll travel the country to highlight some of the Americans who are doing their part to fix our criminal justice system. I'll visit a community battling prescription drug and heroin abuse. I'll speak with leaders from law enforcement who are determined to lower the crime rate and the incarceration rate and with police chiefs who have dedicated their careers to keeping our streets and officers safe. I'll meet with former prisoners who are earning their second chance.

And I'll keep working with lawmakers from both parties who are determined to get criminal justice reform bills to my desk. Earlier this month, Democrats and Republicans came together in the Senate to introduce such a bill, one that would reduce mandatory minimums for nonviolent drug offenders and reward prisoners with shorter sentences if they complete programs that make them less likely to commit a repeat offense. There's a similar bill working its way through the House, and I'm encouraged by these kinds of bipartisan efforts. It is real progress, not liberal ideas or conservative ideas, but commonsense solutions to the challenges we face.

From the halls of Congress to the classrooms in our schools, we pledge allegiance to one Nation under God, with liberty and justice for all. And Justice means that every child deserves a chance to grow up safe and secure, without the threat of violence. Justice means that the punishment should fit the crime. And justice means allowing our fellow Americans who have made mistakes to pay their debt to society and rejoin their community as active, rehabilitated citizens.

Justice has never been easy to achieve, but it's always been worth fighting for. And it's something I'll keep fighting for as long as I have the privilege to serve as your President.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:45 p.m. on October 16 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on October 17. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 16, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on October 17.

Statement on the Adoption of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action To Prevent Iran From Obtaining a Nuclear Weapon
October 18, 2015

Today marks an important milestone toward preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and ensuring its nuclear program is exclusively peaceful going forward. On this Adoption Day of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) reached between the P5-plus-1, EU, and Iran, JCPOA participants will make necessary arrangements and preparations for the implementation of their JCPOA commitments. Today Iran begins to take the steps necessary to implement its JCPOA commitments, including removing thousands of centrifuges and associated infrastructure, reducing its enriched uranium stockpile from approximately 12,000 kilograms to 300 kilograms, and removing the core of the Arak heavy-water reactor and filling it with concrete so that it cannot be used again, among other steps. These next steps will allow us to reach the objectives we set out to achieve over the course of nearly 2 years of tough, principled diplomacy and will result in cutting off all four pathways Iran could use to develop enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon. I am confident in the extraordinary benefits to our national security and the peace and security of the world that come with the successful implementation of the JCPOA.

I have directed that the heads of all relevant executive departments and agencies of the United States begin preparations to implement the U.S. commitments in the JCPOA, in accordance with U.S. law, including providing relief from nuclear-related sanctions as detailed in the text of the JCPOA once the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has verified that Iran has completed all of its nuclear steps. We will also be closely monitoring Iran's adherence to its commitments, working closely with the IAEA and the other JCPOA participants, to ensure Iran fully fulfills each and every one of its commitments.

I welcome this important step forward, and we, together with our partners, must now focus on the critical work of fully implementing this comprehensive resolution that addresses our concerns over Iran's nuclear program.

Remarks at a Roundtable Discussion With Business Leaders on Climate Change
October 19, 2015

Well, I just had the opportunity to meet with CEOs from across the country who are acting on climate change. Historically, when you start talking about an issue like climate

change, the perception is that this is an environmental issue, it's for tree huggers, and that hard-headed businesspeople either don't care about it or see it as a conflict with their bottom lines. And this conversation has confirmed what we've known for quite some time, which is that considerations of climate change, energy efficiency, renewable energies are not only not contradictory to their bottom lines, but for these companies, they're discovering that it can enhance their bottom lines.

For decades, our addiction to fossil fuels, to imported oil, I think, not only threatened our planet and our security, but also our economy. And what we've been able to do over the last 7 years is, even as we've attained number-one status in the production of oil and gas, what we've also been able to do is to slowly begin the transition of our economy to a cleaner, smarter approach to using energy. And many of the companies sitting around here have been at the forefront of that process.

We have now doubled our production of clean energy. We've been reducing our carbon footprint even as the economy grows. And this progress isn't just creating a safer planet, it's also creating jobs, it's creating business opportunities, and it's something that customers are increasingly looking for.

Thanks in part to the investments that we've made, there are already parts of America where clean power is actually not only competitive, but in some cases, cheaper than traditional sources of energy. We have seen, for example, companies like Walmart install onsite solar capacity more actively than just about any other company. We've seen Google become the largest corporate purchaser of renewable energy in the world, with companies like Apple and Costco close behind.

Today, the CEOs around this table who have already done extraordinary work are determined to go even further. Right now we've got 81 companies who've signed on to what we're calling the American Business Act on Climate Change. They operate in all 50 States. They've got about 9 million employees, collectively, and about $5 trillion worth of market cap. These are some of the cutting-edge, most extraordinary businesses that we have. But it's not just the big companies that are getting involved, it's their suppliers and small businesses that are also getting involved and saying, number one, we need a strong outcome in Paris as we go for the climate summit there; and number two, we need to have a partnership between business and the Federal government, State government, local government, non-for-profit sector, all to continue to achieve aggressive reductions in our carbon footprint here in the United States of America as a leader.

And all told, right now the commitments that these companies are making total at least $160 billion. It ranges from reducing emissions to reducing water usage, to pursuing zero-net deforestation, to purchasing 100-percent clean energy. Represented around this table we've got companies as diverse as Intel, which is obviously one of our leading high-tech innovators, and chip manufacturers and inventors. They're—not only are they doing the right thing in the production of their products, but they're also facilitating along with some of their suppliers the ability for us to pursue the data that we need for companies to become even more energy efficient.

And we've got big utilities, like PG&E that have been at the forefront of making it economical for customers to get clean energy. And one of the things that we discussed is the importance of us getting a smarter grid and transmission so that we are able to work to get energy from one part of the country to another part of the country in an efficient way that doesn't have a lot of leakage, but can end up really feeding an increasing demand on the part of customers for clean energy.

We've got chocolate companies that are doing the right thing—[*laughter*]—in terms of how they are getting their inputs and farmers who are doing a wonderful job in California and recognizing in light of changing temperature, what they need to do to be much more energy and environmentally conscious. And big companies like Berkshire Hathaway that, across a whole range of industries, are starting to get involved.

So the bottom line is this. We have to do something about climate change, because not only is it going to have an impact on our children and our grandchildren and we have a moral obligation to leave them a planet that is as wonderful as the one that we inherited from our forebears, but it's really important for America's bottom line and economic growth that we do something about climate change.

If we are at the forefront of this, if we are the innovators, if we are the early adaptors, if we are the example setters, then we're the ones who are going to be creating and selling the products and services that help the entire world adapt to a clean energy future. If we are lagging behind, it's not going to happen.

And so, as we look at this major conference that we're going to be having in Paris in just a few months, where we've already mobilized the international community, including China, to participate, I just want everybody to understand that American businesses want this to happen as well. What they do need is certainty. It's going to be very hard for them to operate if they don't know what the rules of the road are. And what we're trying to do is make sure that everybody is on a fair playing field; everybody is going their part to make sure that we're saving this planet.

If we're able to establish those kinds of rules and that's the goal that we're setting forth in Paris, I have no doubt that these companies are going to excel. And that's going to mean jobs, businesses, and opportunity alongside cleaner air and a better environment.

So I'm very grateful to all of you for participating. And I'm looking forward to getting even more companies on board in the months and years to come.

All right? Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Significant Narcotics Traffickers Centered in Colombia
October 19, 2015

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1622(d), provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia declared in Executive Order 12978 of October 21, 1995, is to continue in effect beyond October 21, 2015.

The circumstances that led to the declaration on October 21, 1995, of a national emergency have not been resolved. The actions of significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States and to cause an extreme level of violence, corruption, and harm in the United States and abroad. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12978 with respect to significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at White House Astronomy Night
October 19, 2015

The President. Hello, everybody! Yay! Well, everybody, have a seat. Welcome to the White House. I love Astronomy Night. And we've got a very clear night to enjoy Astronomy Night. This is some of the most fun that I have on this job. They never let me tinker with the telescopes. [*Laughter*] They don't let me hold the moon rocks when you guys aren't around. Michelle is dying to know how they grow lettuce on the International Space Station. [*Laughter*] But when you guys come, I get to have some fun.

And we've got some space buffs here tonight. We have a number of Members of Congress, including former astronaut, Senator Bill Nelson, from the great State of Florida. My science adviser, John Holdren, is here. Where is he? John—there he is. See, John is a superstar in this crowd. [*Laughter*] The head of NASA, Charlie Bolden, along with 11 of his fellow astronauts. Mae Jameson, the first African American woman in space is here. We've got Bill Nye the Science Guy. We've got the "Mythbusters" in the house.

But the most important thing we have here, in addition to this guy—[*laughter*]—is the young people who are here. Young people from across the country who are already focused on some of the greatest mysteries of the universe.

And I'm going to begin with a quick story. A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away—[*laughter*]—actually, it was in Brooklyn—a 14-year-old asked his parents, "What are the stars?" His parents replied, "They're lights in the sky, kid." The answer did not satisfy that young man, so he set out to answer his endless questions about the stars and the planets and possibilities of extraterrestrial life. And Carl Sagan grew up to become an astronomer who enlarged this country's imagination and sense of wonder about the depths of outer space.

We've got some young Americans here tonight with that same kind of adventurous spirit.

When Pranav Sivakumar was 6 years old, he found an encyclopedia about famous scientists lying around the house. At least, he thinks it was lying around there. Actually, his parents probably were setting it out—[*laughter*]—hoping he was going to run into it. And he's been fascinated with outer space ever since. For years, every Saturday morning, his parents drove him an hour to an astrophysics lab for "Ask-a-Scientist" class. And before long, he teamed up with researchers he met there to study the "gravitational lensing of quasars." That is not what I was thinking about at his age. Pranav was a global finalist in the Google Science Fair, not once, but twice. So you know he's going to do some important things. Give him a big round of applause.

With the help from their coaches, the RCS rocketry champions of Russellville, Alabama—where are you? You're back there. There you go. Stand up, guys. They built a rocket that flies eggs—well, at least one egg—[*laughter*]—nearly one thousand feet into the air and returns to the earth, unbroken, in under a minute. They beat hundreds of other teams to take first place in the America and International Rocketry Challenges. We are very proud of you gentlemen and ladies. Great job.

From the time she was young, Phoebe Kinzelman spent nights like tonight on her grandfather's driveway, staring at the stars through his telescope. She spent a summer at Space Camp at NASA's Johnson Space Center, and her dream is to become an astronaut. I think she speaks for many of us when she says that one of her favorite Instagram accounts is Scott Kelly's. "Space is this humbling thing," Phoebe says, "you can't get too eager to rule the entire universe." But Phoebe is on her way. Where's Phoebe? Stand up, Phoebe, so everybody can you give you a big round of applause.

And where's Pranav? Because I was talking about him, and I didn't—there you go. Give Pranav a big round of applause.

So these are examples of the extraordinary young people that we have here today. Phoebe is giving pretty wise advice for a 17-year-old. Young people like Phoebe should encourage

all of us to help our young people set their sights as high as they want. We need teachers to light a spark of curiosity in young minds. And we've got some outstanding teachers here today. We need parents to leave encyclopedias of famous scientists lying around the house—[*laughter*]—or help turn a bedroom into an ideas laboratory. We need to inspire more young people to ask about the stars, and begin that lifetime quest to become the next great scientist or inventor or engineer or astronaut.

And we have to watch for and cultivate and encourage those glimmers of curiosity and possibility and not suppress them, not squelch them, because not only are the young people's futures at stake, but our own is at stake.

That's one of the reasons that my administration has worked so hard to encourage kids to enter STEM fields, especially young women who are too often underrepresented in these fields. We are halfway to my goal of training 100,000 new STEM teachers by the end of the decade. We're on track to connect 99 percent of our students to high-speed Internet before the end of the decade. And over the past 6 years, our "Educate To Innovate" campaign has raised $1 billion to support STEM programs nationwide, including 80 other Astronomy Nights happening right now all across the country.

So tonight I'm proud to announce new commitments, by cities and organizations all over the country, to expose even more students and their parents to STEM education. Bayer is launching a national effort to help 100,000 American parents and children work on science and engineering projects together. More than 300 foundations, museums, libraries, and schools across the country are partnering to bring hands-on science programming to students who don't have it. Eight observatories in Hawaii will offer all of the residents of that State free, guided tours. They didn't do that when I was in high school. [*Laughter*] Wish we had thought that up earlier.

And—but these are just a few examples of the work that's being done all across the country. And I hope that more are going to follow the leads of these outstanding organizations, because that's how we're going to make sure our next generation of explorers take us even farther than we're going today.

A few hours ago, I got a chance to talk to the astronauts up on the International Space Station, where Scott Kelly is living for an entire year. Last month, NASA found water flowing on Mars. Earlier this year, we mapped Pluto in high resolution. In recent years, we've discovered the first Earth-sized planet orbiting a star in a distant galaxy. And we've even slipped the outermost grasp of our solar system with *Voyager 1*, the first human-made object to venture into interstellar space. In 2017, with the help of American space companies, our astronauts will once again launch to space directly from American soil. And today, NASA is developing the capabilities to send humans to Mars in the 2030s. That means that some of the young people who are here tonight might be working on that project. Some of you might be on your way to Mars.

America can do anything. We've just got to keep on encouraging every new generation to explore and invent and create and discover. We've got to keep encouraging some young kid in Brooklyn or a budding rocket scientist in Alabama or that young girl who's dreaming to become an astronaut. Because as long as young people, like so many of you who are here tonight, keep seeking answers to the great questions, America can do anything, which is why I'm so excited to have you all tonight. You make me feel hopeful about our future, because I know that you're not satisfied with being home to the last great discovery, you want to be home to the next great discovery.

And when I look out in the faces of these young people, I am absolutely confident that there are new frontiers that we're going to be busting through in my lifetime and beyond. So thank you for that. You make me excited, and you make me inspired.

So enough talk. Let's have some fun with this telescope. It looks pretty big. My understanding is, is that we've got another young lady, Sofy, to the—we need you to come up here and help me with this telescope, because I

don't know what I'm doing. [*Laughter*] Where are you? Where are you? Save me. Here we go. Okay. I don't want to break it.

How are you? I'm very proud of you. Let's grab a mike here. All right, introduce yourself.

Brooklyn International High School student Sofy Alvarez. Okay. Hello, I'm Sofy Alvarez, and I'm a student at Brooklyn International High School, and I'm from Paraguay.

The President. Well, it's great to see you, Sofy. So what are we going to do with this big telescope here?

Ms. Alvarez. Well, we're going to see the Moon.

The President. Well, let's do that. I see it there, but you think I'm going to get a better view through this big telescope?

Ms. Alvarez. Probably.

The President. You think so?

Ms. Alvarez. Yes.

The President. Okay. So is it already set up for me?

Ms. Alvarez. Oh, yes. So I just wanted to tell you more about it and how it works.

The President. Please do.

Ms. Alvarez. Yes, so this is a reflecting telescope, so it has three parts. There are two mirrors, and one of them right now is capturing the light of the Moon. And then, the other mirror is just making it focus. And there is an eyepiece lens, which right now is making it—magnifying the image of the Moon. And that's why—and that's how you're going to be able to see the moon, like it's right in front of you.

So do you want to try?

The President. Should I just go ahead and try it?

Ms. Alvarez. Yes.

The President. Okay. Does it matter which eye?

Ms. Alvarez. The one you see the best with.

The President. I'm teasing. [*Laughter*] All right. Wow.

Ms. Alvarez. So right now what you're seeing, they're the black smooth parts, the dark smooth parts. They're called "marias"—"maria" or "seas." And they're lava flows, and they're on the craters. They're the result of heavy bombardments with other gigantic space stuff with the Moon.

The President. Is "space stuff" a scientific term? [*Laughter*]

Ms. Alvarez. Yes, I think so. [*Laughter*]

The President. Can I just say this looks spectacular?

Ms. Alvarez. It does.

The President. You guys are going to get a chance to see through this. But as good as it looks out there, it sure looks better here. Now, the interesting thing is, the image is inverted.

Ms. Alvarez. It is?

The President. Yes, it is. [*Laughter*] See, if you look up, the right side—my right side—is lit up. But if you look through the telescope, it's the left side that's lit up.

Ms. Alvarez. Well, it has a mirror. It's a reflective one. So is it that——

The President. I was trying to make a point—[*laughter*]——

Ms. Alvarez. Yes, yes.

The President. ——about optics for—[*laughter*]. Well, this is spectacular.

So, Sofy, what year are you in school?

Ms. Alvarez. I'm sorry?

The President. What year are you in school? What grade?

Ms. Alvarez. I'm a senior in high school.

The President. You're a senior?

Ms. Alvarez. Yes.

The President. So what do you want to do next year?

Ms. Alvarez. Well, I want to follow photography. I'm also interested in Korean studies. And I also like astronomy, so I want to do something with those three, if possible.

The President. Wow.

Ms. Alvarez. If possible.

The President. Anything is possible with you. You're a spectacular young lady. Give Sofy a big round of applause.

Ms. Alvarez. Thank you.

The President. All right, everybody, we are setting you loose. We've got some incredible exhibits all over the place, not just this telescope, but I know that we've got a mini planetarium and virtual reality and real reality and—[*laughter*]. So there's all kinds of good stuff. I hope you guys have a wonderful time tonight.

And I hope that all of you are inspired the way I am by science and by space.

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:27 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to William S. Nye, television personality and executive director of the Planetary Society; Adam Savage and Jamie Hyneman, hosts, Discovery Channel's "Mythbusters" program; Pranav Sivakumar, student, Illinois Math and Science Academy in Aurora, IL, and his parents Anu Sivakumar and Siva Muthuswamy; Katie Burns, Niles Butts, Andrew Heath, Cristian Ruiz, Cady Studdard, Chelsea Suddith, and Evan Swinney, members, and Joseph Cole and Mark Keeton, coaches, Russellville City Schools Engineering Rocket Team; Phoebe Kinzelman, student, New Trier High School in Winnetka, IL; and Kjell Lindgren, crewmember, International Space Station.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at a Community Forum on Prescription Drug Abuse and Heroin Use in Charleston, West Virginia
October 21, 2015

The President. Thank you! Everybody, please have a seat. Have a seat. Thank you so much. Well, hello, West Virginia! Go Mountaineers! It is great to be back in what is clearly one of the most beautiful States in the United States of America. One of these days, I'm going to finally try a Tudor's Biscuit. [*Laughter*]

I want to begin by thanking Jordan for sharing his extraordinary story with us. Jordan is living proof that when it comes to substance abuse, treatment, and recovery, those things are possible if we work together and if we care about each other. And that's what we're here to talk about today.

We've got some outstanding leaders who care deeply about this issue. I want to thank your Governor, Earl Ray Tomblin, for being here; your two fine Senators, Joe Manchin and Shelley Moore Capito; and Charleston Mayor Danny Jones. We've also got some outstanding members of my administration who are here, first and foremost, our proud daughter of West Virginia, HHS Secretary Sylvia Burwell. We have the Director of National Drug Control Policy, Michael Botticelli. And we have the head of the Drug Enforcement Administration, Chuck Rosenberg. Where's Chuck? He's around here somewhere.

And what I want to do is to have a conversation with the panelists here today, take some questions, because this is something that is not a top-down solution type of problem alone. This is going to have to be everybody working together. And we've got to understand what families are going through, what law enforcement is going through, what our health systems are going through in order for us to wrap our arms around this problem. So, instead of giving a long speech, I just want to offer some initial thoughts to frame our discussion.

When I came into office, I started studying this issue, of what's called opioids. And I was stunned by the statistics. More Americans now die every year from drug overdoses than they do from motor vehicle crashes. More than they do from car accidents. The majority of those overdoses involve legal prescription drugs. In 2013 alone, overdoses from prescription pain medications killed more than 16,000 Americans. One year. This is—I don't have to tell you, this is a terrible toll. The numbers are big, but behind those numbers are incredible pain for families. And West Virginia understands this better than anybody because this State is home to the highest rate of overdose deaths in the Nation.

Now, addiction is not new. But since 1999, sales of powerful prescription pain medications have skyrocketed by 300 percent. In 2012, 259 million prescriptions were written for these drugs, which is more than enough to give every American adult their own bottle of pills.

And as their use has increased, so has the misuse. Some folks are prescribed these medi-

cations for good reason, but they become addicted because they're so powerful. At the same time, we've seen a dramatic rise in the use of heroin, which belongs to the same class of drugs as painkillers, this class of drugs known as opioids. In fact, four in five heroin users—new heroin users—started out by misusing prescription drugs; then, they switched to heroin. So this really is a gateway drug; the prescription drugs become a gateway to heroin. As a consequence, between 2002 and 2013, the number of heroin-related deaths in America nearly quadrupled, although the number of heroin-related overdoses is still far exceeded by the number of legal prescription drug overdoses.

So this crisis is taking lives. It's destroying families. It's shattering communities all across the country. And that's the thing about substance abuse: It doesn't discriminate. It touches everybody, from celebrities to college students, to soccer moms, to inner-city kids. White, Black, Hispanic, young, old, rich, poor, urban, suburban, men and women. It can happen to a coal miner; it can happen to a construction worker, a cop who is taking a painkiller for a work-related injury. It could happen to the doctor who writes him the prescription.

Now, one of the problems we have is, too many families suffer in silence, feeling like they were the only ones struggling to help a loved one. And let's face it, there's still fear and shame and stigma that too often surrounds substance abuse and often prevents people from seeking the help that they deserve. Because when people loosely throw around words like junkie, nobody wants to be labeled in that way.

And part of our goal here, I think, today is to replace those words with words like father or daughter or son or friend or sister. Because then, you understand there is a human element behind this. This could happen to any of us in any of our families. What if we replaced a word like junkie with recovery coaches and specialists like Jordan?

We can't fight this epidemic without eliminating stigma. That's one of the reasons why I'm so proud of Michael, who's the first person in the job of dealing with drugs in America who actually knows what it's like to recover from an addiction. He shares his own story as a way to encourage others to get the help that they need before it's too late. And I'm proud that there's some elected officials in this State who have told their stories about what happened in their family and to themselves in order for us to start lowering those attitudes that keep people from getting help.

So I've made this a priority for my administration. And we're not new to this. In 2010, we released our first National Drug Control Strategy. We followed that up in 2011 with a Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Plan. We're implementing those plans. We're partnering with communities to prevent drug use, reduce overdose deaths, help people get treatment. And under the Affordable Care Act, more health plans have to cover substance abuse disorders. The budget that I sent Congress would invest in things like State overdose prevention programs, preparing more first responders to save more lives, and expanding medication assisted treatment programs.

So we have to make those investments. Rather than spending billions of dollars—taxpayer dollars—on long prison sentences for nonviolent drug offenders, we could save money and get better outcomes by getting treatment to those who need it.

And we can use some of the savings to make sure that law enforcement has the resources to go after the hardened criminals who are bringing hard drugs like heroin into our country. So with no other disease do we expect people to wait until they're a danger to themselves or others to self-diagnose and seek treatment. Every other disease—you've got a broken leg, you've got diabetes, you've got some sort of sickness—we understand that we've got to get you help. And we also understand when it comes to other diseases that if we don't give you help and let you suffer by yourself, then other people could get sick. Well, this is an illness. And we've got to treat it, as such. We have to change our mindset.

And this is one of the reasons that the DEA declared a National Prescription Drug

Take-Back Day, a day when Americans can safely and conveniently dispose of expired and unwanted prescription drugs in their communities. Because most young people who begin misusing prescription drugs don't buy them in some dark alley, they get them from mom or dad's medicine cabinet.

And today we're also announcing some new actions. First, we're ensuring that Federal agencies train Federal health care providers who prescribe opioids. This is a commonsense idea that you're already implementing here in West Virginia. Congress should follow that lead and make this a national priority. And we look forward to working with Governors and the medical community as well.

Second—and we were talking—Joe and I were talking on the flight over here—there is evidence that shows that medicated assisted treatment, if done properly, in combination with behavioral therapy and other support and counseling and 12-step programs and things like that, can work. It can be an effective strategy to support recovery. But it can't just be replacing one drug with another. It's got to be part of a package. So we're going to identify any barriers to—that still exist that are keeping us from creating more of these treatment facilities and incorporating them into our Federal programs.

Private sector partners are helping out to help fight this epidemic as well. And I want to give them some credit. More than 40 medical groups, from the American Medical Association to the American Dental Association are committing to concrete actions. And we need to obviously work with the medical community, because they're the front lines on prescribing this stuff and so there's got to be a sense of responsibility and ownership and accountability there. We've got to expand prescriber training. Increasing the use of naloxone—naloxone?

[*At this point, a panelist confirmed the President's pronunciation.*]

I wanted to make sure I was pronouncing that right, so I talked to the expert—[*laughter*]—naloxone. This is something that if first responders have it can often save quickly the lives of somebody who is having an overdose. So we want to make sure that first responders have a supply of this.

We want to make sure that we're getting more physicians certified to provide medication-assisted treatment. We then have broadcasters like CBS that are providing airtime for education and awareness. And groups like the NBA have committed to running public service announcements about drug abuse. So that's just an example of some of the private sector partnerships that we're forging here.

The point is—and I'm going to end with this—we've all got a role to play. Because of young people like Jordan, they remind us these are our kids. It's not somebody else's kids, it's our kids. It's not somebody else's neighborhood, it's our neighborhood. And they deserve every chance. We've got to make sure that we're doing right by them. We're taking this seriously, and the goal today is to shine a spotlight on this, and then make sure that we walk away out of here, all of us committed to doing something about it. Whether we are a faith leader, whether we are an elected official, whether we're in law enforcement, whether we're a private citizen, a business, we've all got a role to play. You understand that here in West Virginia, and we want to make sure the whole country understands how urgent this problem is.

So, with that, I'm going to turn it over to our moderator, Michael Botticelli. All right.

Office of National Drug Control Policy Director Michael P. Botticelli. Well, good afternoon, everybody. Thank you for being here today. I, too, want to thank Jordan for his really stirring comments. I think it really exemplifies for us the challenges that we have, but all the—also the success and hope that comes with recovery. It's really astounding.

We're here in West Virginia today to highlight the issue not just because of the impact that it's had on West Virginia, but the impact that it's had across the country. But also, West Virginia is working together to implement strategies to really deal with this addiction, and we're proud to be here to help support that.

The President always gives me a lot of credit for talking openly and honestly about my recovery, but candidly, I'm one of millions of Americans who are in recovery today, and my story is not unique. Maybe this part is a little bit unique, sir. [*Laughter*] But I'm one of millions of Americans who have been restored by getting good care and treatment. And I know the President wants what Jordan and I got, and that is a second chance to be restored to productive members of our communities and to give back with—what we've so freely been given. So thank you, sir.

So, with that, today we have a great panel of people who are really going to help provide us with information and their insights about what more we can do on the Federal level. I'm really proud to be a colleague of Secretary Sylvia Burwell.

And, Secretary, I'm going to start. You can feel free to say anything you would like, however. I know we're here in your home State of West Virginia. I know—we have talked—you've been personally impacted by this. But you've also made this a key priority for all of your HHS agencies. So maybe you could talk a little bit about your experience and what HHS is doing to deal with this issue.

Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Mathews Burwell. Absolutely. And first, I'll just say always love coming home. It's great to be home. And it's great to welcome the President to the great State of West Virginia.

And when I became Secretary, this was a priority because it is something that I have personally experienced. Everybody, I'm sure, in this room knows people personally, friends that lost to the addiction and what happens in terms of their children, in terms of their family, in terms of the community. And once you experience this personally, I think that is what energizes you to act.

And at the Department, what we focused on over the last year, figuring out an evidence-based strategy, because we want to get results, we want to change the kinds of things that people have experienced personally. And three things. Number one is changing prescribing practices. As the President said, that 259 million, that can't be right. And so how do we work on that. Second is working on medication-assisted treatment, getting people the access that we've talked about today being so important to people. And third is that access to naloxone. And I look at our colleagues in law enforcement because they're usually the front line, and making sure that when something does go wrong, in terms of that overdose, that we can prevent those deaths, those deaths that are so dramatically impacting the State.

So those are the three things. I'm going to stop because we're here to listen today. Thank you, Michael.

Director Botticelli. Thank you. Cary Dixon, you're a mom of a son who is struggling with—in treatment now, unfortunately in prison for that. But you've turned your struggles into advocacy and action, and you provide support for many, many parents here and around the country for loved ones who are dealing with this. So what has your experience been? What advice do you give parents? But what advice——

[*Director Botticelli bumped his microphone.*]

Sorry about that—what advice should you give us as Federal folks about how we can support parents in this battle?

Huntington, WV, resident Cary Dixon. Well, I think initially, I want to thank President Obama for coming here today to support this cause for our community that has—I mean this substance abuse has—it's become an epidemic in our community. And I thank you for coming today, first and foremost.

And I want to share just briefly—I mean, I've been charged with being a representative for families around our area and actually around the Nation who struggle with this. So, if I can just share some comments that we families have in common. And then, I will——

The President. You can take your time. So you don't——

Ms. Dixon. Okay, thank you.

The President. We want to hear from you.

Ms. Dixon. Thank you. I spoke this morning to a good friend of mine who was just calling me to wish me well today and to say—encourage me in this endeavor. And this friend of

mine lost her daughter 2½ years ago to drugs. And so I don't take this charge of being here lightly. I realize that I'm here to represent families, and I am grateful for that opportunity. So I do want to say that as I'm speaking to you, I'm sharing my story, but I'm sharing the stories of so many other family members that are in this community and in the Nation that have this issue.

And this—also it's important to know—for the sake of time, I've really tried to make this concise, but this is the tip of the iceberg of what families experience and endure when they love someone and care so much about someone with an addiction.

We raise our children in loving homes. We teach them morals and values. We teach them the difference between right and wrong. We wonder what is happening when the grades start slipping, when things that used to be enjoyable for our loved ones no longer interest them.

We're confused as to the cause of the personality changes that we see in our loved ones. We're shocked when we hear of that first DUI. And we're careful—we're fearful when our loved ones are taken to jail for the first time. We're embarrassed when holidays approach and family members are coming in from out of town and our loved ones can't interact because they're under the influence of drugs. We dread the next phone call. We can't sleep because we haven't received a phone call. We don't take vacations for fear of the next crisis. We come back from vacations because there's a crisis. We're sad and angry when valuable, but most importantly, sentimental items are missing from our home, only to find out that they're at a pawn shop or that they're in the hands of drug dealers.

We're relieved when our loved ones acknowledge that they have a serious problem and understand that they need help. And then, we're devastated when we help them seek treatment only to find out that there is a month-long waiting list or that there's no insurance coverage or that there's a big requirement for money up front for treatment.

We are sad and uncomfortable when acquaintances ask us about our loved ones. And we're even more sad when they ask us about every other member of our family and don't mention our loved ones. We neglect our marriages. We neglect other children in our home who are thriving, because all of our attention is focused on addiction and substance abuse.

We disagree endlessly about the right way to handle this problem. And after experiencing years of turmoil, we rest better at night when our loved ones are incarcerated, because the place that you never dreamed that your loved one would ever even see, a jail or a prison, is safer than them being on the street, interacting with drug dealers or pushing a needle into their arm.

The ones of us who are fortunate, we lay awake at night, and we plan our loved ones' funerals in our mind. The ones of us who aren't fortunate actually do plan the funerals, in reality, of our loved ones. And this is where addiction has taken us. This is where substance abuse has taken us.

Now, all that being said, there is hope. And that's probably the most important thing to remember here. We're so grateful to Recovery Point and Matt Boggs and people in recovery that are helping others. We're grateful to our mayor, the mayor of Huntington, Steve Williams, who has so tirelessly and endlessly spearheaded programs to help our community recover. Don Purdue who has made it possible for people to receive treatment in our communities.

I think education is important. And I was fortunate enough to find a group called the Loved Ones Group, developed by a man named Ed Hughes. It's a 7-week series that helps provide education and information and support for family members or those who care about someone with an addiction. The final week of this program, we get to speak to people in recovery. They come and speak to our group of people there. And it inspires us because we know that recovery is possible and that it can happen.

For too long, we've been silent. And I think is going to answer your question. As parents

and family members, because of the stigma of this disease and the shame that we feel, we've been silent. And I think that is holding us back. We need to open our voices so that people don't feel ashamed. This is a disease. It is sick—a sickness. But education, educating ourselves as much as we can as family members and speaking out to raise awareness is, I think, critical in helping the situation.

I'm almost finished. People in 12-step recovery groups and different groups rely on a higher power. I'm a person of faith, and my faith has helped me navigate this journey that we've been on. And I just want to share with you a verse that I hold dear for my own family member who is sick, but also offer it to others. Jeremiah 29:11—"'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'"

And I believe that every person in the throes of addiction and the disease of substance abuse needs hope in a future. And I believe this for their families as well.

Thank you so much.

Director Botticelli. Cary, thanks so much for sharing your story. It obviously touched everybody here in terms of not only your struggles, but articulating the hope that's on the other side. And we will continue to work with parents as we deal together with this epidemic.

Dr. Michael Brumage, you have been involved in this work for many years. You're here at the local level, so love to hear your experience and share what you think are some—both some successes and challenges in dealing with this issue.

Kanawha-Charleston Health Department Executive Director Michael Brumage. Certainly. And thank you very much. Welcome to West Virginia, Mr. President and Mr. Botticelli. Welcome home, Secretary Burwell.

I've been on the job actually only 79 days here in Charleston. I came back home after being 29 years away. And I knew what I was coming into when I came home. I knew there was a heroin and opioid abuse epidemic in the State. I knew we had the highest rates of Hepatitis B and the second highest rates of Hepatitis C in the Nation, largely due to needle-sharing among addicts. But I also knew that coming home that Mountaineers would take this kind of challenge head on. That's the kind of people that there are in the State of West Virginia. And so I wanted to be part of the solution here in the State. And I knew it would require patience, persistence, and people—lots of good people here.

With the help of so many community partners and with my good friend and colleague over at Cabell-Huntington Health Department, Dr. Mike Kilkenney, we've been able to get some programs off the ground, working together. And I think we're moving in the right direction. In about 6 weeks, we're going to begin our own harm reduction program here in Charleston. We're going to have syringe exchange as part of that. We'll be testing for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV. We don't want to become another Scott County, Indiana, where they had an outbreak of HIV, almost 200 cases in a small rural community there.

We'd also like to offer contraceptive services to women of the reproductive age who are addicted to drugs to prevent neonatal abstinence syndrome as well.

And more than anything else, what I think we'd like to do is to treat the people who come through our doors for this program with dignity and respect and the kind of love that they deserve, because the ultimate disease underlying every addiction, in my perspective—from my perspective, is disconnection and alienation from themselves and from everybody else around them.

Two weekends ago, I began working with West Virginia University researchers on a program of mindfulness-based relapse prevention with opioid addicts in recovery. This is based off of the pioneering work done at the University of Washington. And one of the more pleasant surprises that I've seen since I've been here on the job is the close connection between public health and public safety. Our law enforcement community has just been outstanding, and we've been really privileged to work with them.

Finally, I was able to also sit together with Delegate Dr. Chris Stansbury from Kanawha County to sponsor legislation. He's going to sponsor legislation to make naloxone an over-the-counter medication, the way it is in 14 other States.

And then, as you've said, Mr. President, this is a multifaceted issue. It requires a lot of different people to come together to fix this. It's not a quick fix. It requires a collaborative, multiagency approach with public health, mental health, primary care, schools and school nurses, law enforcement, our own judiciary community. And finally, I'd be remiss if I left out our business and industry, because jobs provide not only an income, they provide a sense of purpose and meaning in the lives of people.

And so I'm hoping that by the end of your visit today, Mr. President, that you'll be impressed with some of the things that are going on and how much West Virginians are really digging in to try to address this issue. Thank you.

Director Botticelli. Thank you, Doctor.

Chief Webster, Dr. Brumage gave you the perfect lead-in and segue and talked about the importance of public health and public safety collaboration. So I'd love to hear your thoughts and what you're doing here.

Charleston, WV, Chief of Police Brent Webster. Well, sure. First of all, I'd like to, again, thank the President of the United States for making this a focus, coming to Charleston, West Virginia, and also providing me an opportunity to represent Charleston and all of law enforcement, effectively.

I think this is where most people probably look at the person in uniform and they probably say, okay, this is the guy that's now going to tell us we need to build more jails and make tougher laws. And that's not me. We don't—this is such an epidemic, and we cannot arrest our way out of this mess.

And I think the President touched on it briefly. What the President said earlier is true, because our—we want to arrest the violent drug dealers that are creating havoc in our communities. We have our share of violent crime. And we are very fortunate, our drug Task Force, we have a great partnership with your Appalachian HIDTA. They fund so many of our efforts. So, on a daily basis, the bad guy get arrested. We made a significant seizure yesterday.

So we feel in law enforcement, as I'm sure our counterparts do, we really attack the supply side of this issue very well. And so we're not going to back down from that, and we're going to keep trying to remove people that are dangerous from society. But what's nice about this, and what I want to talk about, though, is—the attacking, as a strategy, the demand side. And that's what I think is very nice about this panel and this gathering, because we've got a lot of things we can really talk about.

We basically have a community of zombies, for lack of a better word, walking around. They need treatment very badly. And they're coming up to our officers; they actually are—some don't want help yet, but at some point, they do want help. And we want to get them help. And a couple of the strategies that we've worked on that we want to attack the demand side of it, not so much the supply in this conversation, is that we have trained our officers in naloxone. And that's been traditionally, up until very recently, just something that our fire department—and they do more of the—they can do the nasal and the IV.

We trained all of our officers, regardless of their assignment, to be able to save somebody's life, administer the nasal and the rescue breathing mask that's accompanied. And again, that one's paid for with Appalachian HIDTA, and such a great partnership. They recognize that it's supply and demand.

And so when, interestingly, though, when I went to the roll calls and started talking about this to the officers, first, you're kind of, like, that might be more of a fire department role. That might be more—but as we talked more and I went down the line to—and said, well, has anybody have anybody affected by an addiction, and I've yet to go to one roll call—one roll call—I've been to numerous, but I've been yet to one where someone said no, someone has ever said, yes, my sister, my aunt, my—so that's one.

And we've just got them out into our cars in the last week, so we don't have any success stories—and we don't want to have any stories, really, unless they're—we want them all to be positive. But we know the fire department will continue to administer most of the Narcan. But we want to be in a position to save a life, much like a child drowning and we can administer CPR.

Another thing we're doing that we're real proud of, and that's working with the United States Attorney, which is the LEAD program, the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion program. And basically, what—since 2014, we've had 39, I'd call them low-level users that were selling drugs to support their habits. And basically, they're hit with a stark decision right at the arrest gate. You have an opportunity to go to jail, or you can seek immediate treatment. And of the 39 people that have taken us up on that, since 2014, just one has been rearrested. That's—I think that's pretty impressive. [*Applause*] And that's a partnership with the U.S. Attorney's Office and something that I think our officers are coming around to understanding what kind of problem we have.

And I would just say, finally—because we do support everything Dr. Brumage and the Kanawha County Health Department is doing with his harm reduction plan and how we factor into that with the needle exchange program—but finally, we do, we have a Handle With Care program that we piloted in 2013 in two—one school on the West Side, then a second school, and now we do it for the whole city. I've seen some smiles in the crowd because there's teachers in here.

But what we're—what we've realized has been lost is, when police officers go to crime scenes, what are they there for? They're there to take witness statements. They're there to arrest the so-called bad guy. And then, they leave. But who is looking out for the children, the collateral damage? Who's looking out for the child that maybe is just trying to do his homework, mom and dad are fighting. We come in, arrest dad. Mom cries. She's got to go to the hospital. And so that child gets left behind many, many times. And so we started a notification system to where the next day, our officers that are on the scene will send a notification to the principal or to the counselor basically to say, handle that child with care today. Maybe that child needs an extra day before—[*applause*].

And so those are ways that we realize that we're not going to arrest our way out of this. We have our place, and we can always use additional law enforcement resources. I'm not going to lie to you. [*Laughter*] But we're all in this together, and it's affecting all of us.

The President. Okay, so, excellent.

Director Botticelli. Thank you, Chief. I think that's an extraordinary example of your willingness and your partnership.

I'm now going to turn to Susan Shumate from the Charleston Gazette, who I believe is going to ask questions of the panel that come from the community.

Charleston Gazette-Mail Publisher Susan Chilton Shumate. Thank you for coming to West Virginia, Mr. President, Secretary Burwell, and Secretary Botticelli and the rest of the panel to address the chronic issue of opioid addiction. The Charleston Gazette-Mail has done numerous stories over lots of years about this issue facing West Virginia, and we were able to solicit hundreds of questions from our readers over the last 5 days for the President and the panel.

And with us here is David and Kate Grubb with their question for the President.

Drug Addiction/Drug Treatment and Prevention Efforts/Smoking/Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act/Insurance Coverage for Drug Treatment Programs

Q. First of all, mom—Cary—there isn't a parent here who had a dry eye when you spoke. From your heart, you've expressed exactly what we feel. And Danny knows this too.

Ms. Dixon. Thank you.

Mr. President, I want to say that it is—and I'm going to take this opportunity—it is wonderful to have an intelligent, caring, thoughtful person in your position.

The President. Thank you.

Q. Thank you so much for coming. This issue—my wife and I, we have five daughters.

Mr. President, you might relate a little bit to that.

The President. I can relate to that. [*Laughter*] I don't know how you did five. [*Laughter*] Two keeps me busy.

Q. And we live here in the East End. My second oldest daughter, Jessica, has been battling heroin addiction for 7 years. Ironically, the last time we were in this room was when our daughter was in the eighth grade here at Roosevelt and was a cheerleader. She made good grades. She was socially involved. Her future was bright. But as Jordan mentioned, her life got put on hold for a long time.

Last month, the middle of August, our daughter overdosed. We found her in her bedroom, tourniquet on her arm, syringe next to her. She was already turning blue.

My wife administered CPR. We called 9–1–1. While we were waiting I held her and said, don't leave us yet. Fortunately, and I want to say this to the chief, the response was amazing. Less than 5 minutes, the EMTs and the police officers were there. The police officers were sympathetic. They were helpful. The EMTs administering Narcan, coupled with the CPR, saved our daughter's life. And she's now in recovery.

This is her fourth time. It usually takes more than one time. And we think this one will be the one. We are full of hope. But we understand the pain: the pain in this room, the pain that families feel. The concern we have is access: Where do you get the treatment? How do you get the treatment?

And you, Cary, you mentioned it. As soon as this overdose happened, we called hotlines, and we got numbers to call, and we called those numbers, and they said, "Well, there's a 3-month wait," or, "Well, we don't take Medicaid cards," or, "This wasn't really the facility that could handle your type of problem."

The other problem with Medicaid cards and things of that nature is, you can't always go out of State. What if the facility is across the river? We're a border State. We need to be able to have that ability to go to the facility that may be best for our children.

The bottom line is, we need resources, and we need to find a way to put those resources into effect so that we have the facilities. Because there's so many people that want help, like our daughter, but it took forever to find a place for her. Right now she's in Michigan. That was the best we could do. Why can't we have lots of these types of facilities with trained staff here in West Virginia, close to home?

And lastly, I want to say, one of the best provisions of the Affordable Care Act is that it does require coverage for drug treatment. And thank you for that. But one of the concerns is that if there aren't facilities available, then the treatment coverage can be illusory. So we have to close that gap.

And I think the biggest issue there is, are you concerned, as sometimes we get concerned given the current political climate, that the Affordable Care Act will be weakened or repealed either before the end of your term or in the next term? What are your feelings about our commitment to that program and to the drug rehabilitation part of that program?

The President. Right. Well, first of all, as with Cary, I just want to thank you and your wife for sharing your story. And you're right, if you are a parent, then listening to Cary or listening to you, you can relate.

I told somebody, one of my favorite sayings I ever heard about having children is, it's like having your heart walking around outside your body. [*Laughter*] All you care about is making sure they're okay. But they're so vulnerable. And you're just, as a parent, always navigating, just trying to figure out, how do I make sure they're going to be okay? And when something like this happens—and I think it's something that you sharing your story, Cary, and you sharing your story, sir, really emphasizes, this is happening in families everywhere with great parents who love their kids.

I mean, obviously, there are a lot of kids who are in less stable homes and are more vulnerable. But the way this kind of phenomenon is penetrating all communities means that we have to understand that there's no "us" and "they" here. There's no "us" and "them." This is all of us in every school, in every community,

in every neighborhood. And it could be your child.

So the—so I think the first thing to do—and this conversation has been so helpful—is to understand that this is an American problem that cuts across groups and political affiliations. Because once we understand that, then I think we're in a position to deal with it together as opposed to turning it into another political football. That's point number one.

Point number two: One of my goals when I came into office was for us to restore a sense of balance when it came to dealing with drugs. And this was true for illegal drugs, but it was true for legal, but overprescribed drugs. For a long time, our goal has been to deal with the supply side. And as the chief said, we're very aggressive. I promise you, there's no backing off us trying to make sure that some Mexican heroin cartel is not getting heroin into West Virginia or anyplace else in this country. And we've got a lot of terrific agents and Border Patrols and officials. I mean, we have ramped up aggressively, under my administration and under previous administrations, interdiction efforts. So we don't stop that, and we don't make apologies for that. And if there is somebody who is out there systematically making millions or hundreds of millions of dollars off the destruction of our kids, we're going to go after them. We don't apologize for that.

But we were underinvesting and, even with the changes we've made, continue to underinvest in the demand side, in the prevention and the treatment that is so necessary. And this is a real opportunity. It's an important moment for us because if we can start thinking intelligently about treatment on the opioids and prescription drug side, then people start making the connection, well, we should have treatment when it comes to heroin, and then, maybe they start thinking, well, we should have treatment when it comes to other narcotics and drugs that are affecting and devastating families and with—potentially in different ways.

But for a long time I think treatment was seen as a second-class citizen to interdiction and arrest and incarceration. And that mindset needs to change. The good news is, we're seeing that mindset changing, and it is on a bipartisan basis, which I think is really interesting.

To go back, because I want to make sure that people understand, we're putting an end to the old politics on this. Democrats and Republicans were both responsible for wanting to look tough on the War on Drugs and ramping up incarceration. It wasn't just one side or another. And now both at the same time are realizing, you know what, what are we doing here? Why is it that we're willing to invest $20,000 a year in incarcerating a young person when we might have spent a few thousand dollars on the front end to avoid them going to the prison in the first place?

And that mindset means that resources, hopefully, will start channeling in a new direction. But we've got to make sure that the money is following the insight. I think we're at the stage now where people are starting to realize that we need more treatment. But the budgets are not yet reflective of that awareness. And that's going to require Congress.

So, in our budget, for example, we're proposing an additional $133 million for enhanced treatment and prevention programs. But it's also going to involve States, State legislatures, counties, local governments, all also recognizing this is something that every community needs. And we can't be stigmatizing this.

Having a treatment facility is just like having a health clinic for any other illness, and it's because it's affecting people just as much. And we know how to do this when we do it smartly. Think about smoking—and I can say this as an ex-smoker who still chews on Nicorette—which is okay, it's expensive, but I can afford it. [*Laughter*] Better not start, though, young people. [*Laughter*] If you look at how drastically we've been able to reduce the smoking rates, despite the fact that we never outlawed smoking, but what we did was, we just enhanced education, made it more difficult for kids to access it, stopped peddling it, stopped advertising it, took some of the money out of it. And over time, a public health model had a drastic impact on smoking.

And Nicorette is—or nicotine is as addictive as any of the drugs we're talking about. So, if

we could do on that with the public health model, there's no reason we can't do it here as well. But it does require a change in mindset. And as you pointed out, it requires additional money.

Last point I'll make, on the insurance side: You are absolutely right that insurance coverage is not enough if there is no treatment center for you to apply that insurance. So we're going to have to build and fund and support more treatment centers locally.

On the other hand, if there is a treatment center and you don't have any insurance, then you might have to mortgage your house. And I am very proud of the fact that the Affordable Care Act—also known as Obamacare—[*laughter*]—which I mean, I won't get on a soapbox here, but there's 17 million people who have health insurance who didn't have it. Our health—and by the way, our overall costs for health care have been at the—going up at the slowest rate in my lifetime after we passed the law. So it's not bankrupting the Government, not bankrupting States.

But one of the things that it does is, it requires that insurance—private insurance—that's sold on the marketplaces that are subsidized by the Federal Government have to provide coverage for substance abuse programs. And given the prevalence of what's happening to our children and our schools, the notion that we would not have our insurance policies cover this—they're going to cover a broken leg, but they're not going to cover a situation where your child might die?—that doesn't make any sense.

And so I think that we're trying to nudge that along through the marketplaces. But I think one of the things that we need to do is to have consumer groups and our medical associations and others really push a little bit more on the insurance companies to say that this is something that is vital and that everybody should have coverage. Because you don't know if it's going to be your child. And that's the most important point here.

Candy——

Ms. Dixon. Cary.

The President. ——or Cary is carrying a particular burden. And I was most touched when Cary talked about her other children. But I thought about Malia and Sasha. It's not—they're wonderful girls, but they're teenagers. They do some things. [*Laughter*] And I remember me being a teenager, and I've written about this, I did some stuff. [*Laughter*] And I've been very honest about it. And so what I think about is, there but for the grace of God, and that's what we all have to remember. And when we do, then I think we've got a chance to make a real change.

But thank you for sharing your story.

Early Childhood Education, Prenatal Care, and Economic Development in At-Risk Communities/Drug Treatment and Prevention Efforts

Ms. Shumate. This was from Natalie Laliberty, who is a principal at Ruthlawn Elementary School. And she says: "As the principal of an elementary school, I see the harm being done to kids who are born addicted or live in traumatic and chaotic drug environment. Many of the kids have any number of learning and behavioral problems upon entering preschool and kindergarten. How can the community at large and schools work together to intervene in these children's lives during their early years when brain growth stimuli is most critical? Thank you."

The President. Well, I'll make sure to get the doctor involved in this one as well. And I know that Sylvia and others have—through HHS were working on this a lot.

I'll just make two quick comments. Number one, we know that you learn more between the time you're born and 3 years old than you will ever learn the rest of your life. You are a sponge at that age. And so the more we can invest in early childhood education, prenatal education for parents, home visitation with at-risk moms—and we know who they are. If you're a poor teenage single mom who maybe doesn't have a lot of support, then you are just much more likely to not know how to express the love you have for your child effectively, even if you love them just as much as we love our kids. But you just don't have the tools. So that has got to

be an emphasis at the State and local levels. That's where we can really make a difference. But us being able to target at-risk parents, new parents, young parents, that can be extraordinarily helpful.

The second thing that I'll just say—and then maybe, Doctor, you might want to chime in on this—and here, I'm going to be a little controversial, but I'm in my last term, I only got a year left so—[*laughter*]. And it's not like my poll numbers are that high in West Virginia. [*Laughter*] So I figure I can go ahead and say it. I think one of the benefits of conversation like this is to highlight the fact that income and race make a difference here. The truth of the matter is, is that poor communities are more vulnerable.

One of the useful things about this forum is, we're all vulnerable, but it's almost like if you're healthy and you get sick, you have more antibodies and resistance. And if you're poor—or if your body is already weakened and you get sick, then you're more vulnerable, right?

There are some communities we know that are more vulnerable, and the kids there are more vulnerable. And part of what I hope this discussion does is to remind us that just as it could be Malia or Sasha or Cary's kids or any of our kids, those kids who don't always look like us and don't live in the same neighborhood as us, they're just as precious. And their parents aren't—and their parents are much less equipped than you, sir, or I would be in terms of dealing with this stuff. And we've got to get them help too.

So I think the doctor earlier talked about the importance of jobs and economic development and broad-based approaches so that growth helps everybody. There is some connection to substance abuse and the vulnerabilities that communities have. And we've got—and let's face it, part of the reason West Virginia probably has more cases partly has to do with the economics that have been taking place in some of these communities, which is why it's so important for us to also push on that front as well.

But, Doctor, any thoughts on that question about the vulnerability of children and how we can get to them quicker, more effectively?

Dr. Brumage. Yes, Mr. President. One of the things that I'm hoping to kick off here next week is a discussion about probably one of the most important studies that most people have never heard of called the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study. Looking—the baseline study was done with 17,000 people at Kaiser Permanente in San Diego, California.

And what they found out was that when people score high on a scale of 10 questions—everybody has a score from 0 to 10—the higher you are on that scale, the more likely you are to have problems with addiction, with IV drug use, with smoking, with obesity, with all the public health problems that we're really seeing right now. I think a trauma-informed community and an open discussion about where these problems are going is the first step in addressing why people are using drugs in the first place.

And, Mr. President, you're absolutely right. What happens in those early years and reaching out to those families who we know are at risk and devoting the kind of resources that we would need to is the—really the first step I think in really truncating this.

Because if we don't, what we're going to be doing 25, 30 years from now is having the same discussion about why these kids are abusing drugs, obese, and so on and so forth. So I think that that's a really important part and to have that sort of open discussion about that. Because it happens in good families, as well as in families who are disadvantaged.

But I agree with you, it happens probably more often in families that are disadvantaged. And it perpetuates the cycle of poverty as well.

The President. Well, and for those of us who are more advantaged, the disadvantaged communities create the markets that then seep into the more advantaged communities, right? So the reason we have a fire department is because if your neighbor's house is burning down, you don't want to just leave it to the neighbor to figure out whether or not he can afford to put out the fire. You have an interest in making sure that fire gets put out before it burns your house.

Well, the same is true with drugs. That child who is poor, you may think, well, I don't have to worry about that kid. It's not my kid. My kid is going to be okay. But if you start seeing more and more kids who are more and more involved in the drug trade, over time, that migrates into every community. And that's part of the reason why we've got to care about every kid out here and make sure—they're vulnerable.

Chief.

Chief Webster. And if I can add also on that issue to the question, that Handle With Care Program—Ruthlawn Elementary is—I don't believe—it's not in the city of Charleston. But the Handle With Care is about to go Statewide if it hasn't. But the Handle With Care Program will fix some of those issues. I know we're talking about addiction and maybe some others that are born with addiction. Well, the Handle With Care may not fix that, but it will at least alert the proper authorities that child is struggling because of some trauma or substance abuse in the home.

The President. I think this is a really smart program. I've got to tell you, before I came down I hadn't heard about it. And I'd really like to see us advertise this more across the country and adopt this as a best practice.

Director Botticelli. I want to thank everyone for coming today. And I want to particularly thank our incredible panel here, in sharing their experience, but I think also giving us some ideas. And your innovation, I think, can really help spur replication around the country. So I really want to thank you for doing that.

And just for closing comments, I'll ask the President to say a few things.

The President. Well, I've been talking too much. I want to say three things. One is, we're just talking about the Handle For Care program and the gentleman here talked about his daughter's life's being saved by an EMT and police officers on the spot. Our law enforcement officers sometimes get a lot of attention when something bad happens. They don't get enough attention every single day when they're out there saving lives, doing the right thing, looking out for people.

And when I've talked to law enforcement, there is an incredible sense of compassion and empathy. And most folks aren't in there just to try to be hardnosed. Most of the time, they're just trying to help folks. And so, number one, they deserve our thanks.

But number two, the more we're supporting innovative policing that isn't just thinking, my job is to clean up a mess after it happens, but rather, I'm part of the community, and I need to be part of preventing crime and stuff from happening in the first place, I think we have to encourage that mindset in a lot of law enforcement. I'm really proud of them, so they deserve some applause for that.

Second thing I want to emphasize, we live in a time when our politics gets so polarized. And we've got talk radio, and we've got the Internet. And it seems like every year, sort of, the rhetoric ratchets up about how this party is destroying the country or that folk—those folks are unpatriotic or they're evil or what have you. And I am deeply encouraged by the fact that on this issue, we're seeing bipartisanship and we haven't seen some of that rhetoric. And I hope that that continues because that's how we'll solve this problem. And the elected officials who are here, they represent, I think, that best tradition. And I just want to commend them for that, because that's how we'll be able to get stuff done, both at the congressional level and at the State and local levels as well.

And then, finally, I just want to once again thank Cary, the parents who we heard from here. We are just so grateful that you're willing to share your story. It will save lives. And we want you to know that you're in our thoughts and prayers. And we want to just give you all the encouragement in the world. But just as importantly, or more importantly, we want to give your children encouragement, because they've got great parents and these things could happen to any of us, but we want them to know that we love them and are looking out for them as well.

All right? Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:45 p.m. at the East End Family Resource Center. In his re-

marks, he referred to Jordan Coughlen, student, West Virginia University, who introduced the President. Ms. Dixon referred to J. Matt Boggs, executive director, Recovery Point in Huntington, WV; Delegate Don Perdue of the West Virginia House of Delegates; and Ed Hughes, president and chief executive officer, Loved Ones Group in Huntington, WV. Dr. Brumage referred to Michael E. Kilkenney, physician director, Cabell-Huntington Health Department; and Delegate Chris Stansbury of the West Virginia House of Delegates. Chief Webster referred to U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of West Virginia R. Booth Goodwin II. He also referred to the Appalachia High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), a program division of the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Memorandum on Addressing Prescription Drug Abuse and Heroin Use
October 21, 2015

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Addressing Prescription Drug Abuse and Heroin Use

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to reduce prescription pain medication and heroin overdose deaths, promote the appropriate and effective prescribing of pain medications, and improve access to treatment, I hereby direct the following:

Section 1. Policy. The epidemic of prescription pain medication and heroin deaths is devastating families and communities across the country. Prescription drugs—especially opioid pain medications—have been implicated increasingly in drug overdose deaths over the last decade. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the number of overdose deaths involving prescription opioids quadrupled between 1999 and 2013, with more than 16,000 deaths in 2013. In recent years, overdose deaths involving heroin have sharply increased, nearly doubling between 2011 and 2013. The CDC has identified addiction to prescription pain medication as the strongest risk factor for heroin addiction.

One of the most significant ways to address these issues is to ensure that medical professionals receive adequate training on appropriate pain medication prescribing practices, and the risks associated with these medications. The Federal Government must do more to ensure that such training is provided on an ongoing basis to health care professionals prescribing pain medications. Work is already underway to achieve this goal across executive departments and agencies, but these efforts must be accelerated given the urgency of the problem. The training of Federal health care personnel in appropriate prescribing of controlled substances should be a model for similar initiatives developed across the country.

An additional priority in addressing prescription opioid pain medication misuse and heroin use is improved access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT). MAT is the use of Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved medications, such as buprenorphine, buprenorphine-naloxone combination products, methadone, and naltrexone—in combination with counseling, other behavioral therapies, and patient monitoring—to provide treatment for opioid use disorders. Only a small minority of Americans who might benefit from this treatment are receiving it. Federally administered health benefit programs can help to increase access to these services. These programs also can serve as models for reviewing and modernizing coverage policies and benefit management strategies in response to clinical prescribing guidelines and recommendations for the treatment of chronic pain. For example, a CDC study found that the use of methadone in pain treatment is associated with a disproportionately high number of overdose deaths compared to other opioid pain relievers. Federally administered health benefit programs can use benefit

design and formulary management to take steps to reduce the risk of opioid use disorders.

Sec. 2. Training for Federal Prescribers. (a) Executive departments and agencies (agencies) shall, to the extent permitted by law, provide training on the appropriate and effective prescribing of opioid medications to all employees who are health care professionals and who prescribe controlled substances as part of their Federal responsibilities and duties. Agencies also shall require all contractors who are health care professionals, spend 50 percent or more of their clinical time under contract with the Federal Government, and prescribe controlled substances under the terms and conditions of their contract or agreement with the Federal Government to obtain such training. These training requirements shall also be implemented for clinical residents and other clinical trainees who spend 50 percent or more of their clinical time practicing in an executive department or agency facility.

(b) The training must address, at a minimum, best practices for appropriate and effective prescribing of pain medications, principles of pain management, the misuse potential of controlled substances, identification of potential substance use disorders and referral to further evaluation and treatment, and proper methods for disposing of controlled substances. Training approaches may include both traditional continuing education models and models that pair intensive coaching for the highest volume prescribers with case-based courses for other prescribers. To the extent feasible, training adopted by agencies should be consistent with consensus guidelines on pain medication prescribing developed by the CDC.

(c) Agencies shall require all employees, contractors, and clinical residents and trainees described in subsection (a) of this section to complete training within 18 months of the date of this memorandum and a refresher course every 3 years thereafter.

Sec. 3. Improving Access to Medication-Assisted Treatment and Modernizing Benefit Design. (a) Agencies that directly provide health care services, contract to provide health care services, reimburse for health care services, or facilitate access to health benefits shall, to the extent available and permitted by law, review all health benefit requirements, drug formularies, program guidelines, medical management strategies, drug utilization review programs, and all other relevant policies, tools, and strategies in order to identify any barriers individuals with opioid use disorders would encounter in accessing MAT. This review also shall identify any current practices, such as use of methadone as a preferred or first-line pain management drug that are inconsistent with the goals of reducing opioid use disorders and overdoses.

(b) Not later than 90 days after the date of this memorandum, each agency described in subsection (a) of this section shall submit an action plan to the Directors of the White House Domestic Policy Council and the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy addressing the barriers and practices identified in their reviews.

(c) The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall make clinical and other experts from agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services, such as the National Institutes of Health, the CDC, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the FDA, available to consult with other agencies on their reviews as necessary.

Sec. 4. General Provisions. (a) Nothing in this memorandum shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

> (i) the authority granted by law to a department or agency, or the head thereof; or
> (ii) the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(b) This memorandum shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(c) This memorandum is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

BARACK OBAMA

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Situation in or in Relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo

October 21, 2015

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to the situation in or in relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo declared in Executive Order 13413 of October 27, 2006, is to continue in effect beyond October 27, 2015.

The situation in or in relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has been marked by widespread violence and atrocities that continue to threaten regional stability, continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13413 with respect to the situation in or in relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
October 21, 2015.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan

October 22, 2015

President Obama. Well, let me just say it is wonderful to welcome back Prime Minister Sharif and his delegation to the Oval Office. Obviously, the United States and Pakistan have a longstanding relationship. We work and cooperate on a whole host of issues, not just on security matters, but also on economic and scientific and educational affairs. And we're looking forward to using this meeting as an opportunity to further deepen the relationship between the United States and Pakistan.

I should note that we have an extraordinary Pakistani American community that is helping to build this country. And that—those people-to-people ties are part of what makes this relationship so special.

So, Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for coming. And welcome to you and your delegation.

Prime Minister Sharif. Thank you, Mr. President, for inviting me to Washington once again, and also thank you for the generous hospitality you extended to me and members of my delegation.

The Pakistan-America relations span over 70 years, and it is my endeavor to further strengthen and solidify this relationship. And I look forward to a very constructive engagement with you today to add greater substance and depth to our relationship, as you've very rightly mentioned.

So thank you for inviting me.

President Obama. Thank you. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Joint Statement by President Obama and Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan

October 22, 2015

At the invitation of President Obama, Prime Minister Sharif paid an official visit to Washington from October 20 to 23, 2015 that reinforced the commitment of both leaders to an enduring U.S.-Pakistan partnership, a prosperous Pakistan, and a more stable region. President Obama and Prime Minister Sharif held wide-ranging discussions at the White House today. The two leaders expressed their conviction that a resilient U.S.-Pakistan partnership is vital to regional and global peace and security and reaffirmed their commitment to address evolving threats in South Asia.

An Enduring Partnership

President Obama and Prime Minister Sharif reaffirmed that a mutual commitment to democracy is a key pillar of the U.S.-Pakistan partnership. President Obama commended Prime Minister Sharif's leadership in strengthening and consolidating Pakistan's democratic institutions. Building on this progress, President Obama and Prime Minister Sharif expressed their desire to expand the bilateral relationship in areas outside the traditional security realm in recognition of the multifaceted issues facing both countries, including: trade and investment; education, science and technology; clean, efficient and affordable energy; efforts to counter climate change; economic growth; regional integration; rule of law; people-to-people and cultural ties; and support for democratic principles. President Obama underscored the importance of Pakistan's role, as one of the largest Muslim democracies, in using its influence in support of peace, security, development, and human rights around the world. Both leaders committed to build on the ongoing U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue to advance progress in these and other areas.

The two leaders emphasized the need to maintain the positive momentum in promoting people-to-people contacts and parliamentary exchanges. They also acknowledged the important role played by the Pakistani diaspora in the United States and the contributions that this community has traditionally made in strengthening the bilateral relationship.

Economic Growth, Trade, and Investment

The President and Prime Minister affirmed that economic growth in Pakistan provides the surest foundation for the prosperity of its people and the security of the region. President Obama commended Pakistan's reform program, which has re-established macroeconomic stability through a combination of prudent fiscal and monetary policies, the rebuilding of foreign exchange reserves, and continuing reforms in the energy sector. Prime Minister Sharif reaffirmed his commitment to consolidate economic gains and to continue to implement his government's reform agenda, including the government's commitment to complete the set of home grown reforms that is being supported by the World Bank Group, the Asian Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and other multilateral financial institutions. The two sides indicated their intent to continue robust macroeconomic cooperation through the Economic and Finance Working Group as an element of the Strategic Dialogue.

The leaders reaffirmed that the United States and Pakistan have a mutual interest in expanding bilateral trade and investment. President Obama indicated that the United States will help Pakistan create conditions for accelerated trade and investment-driven growth. The leaders noted the reauthorization of the General System of Preferences (GSP) program and acknowledged the importance of the U.S.-Pakistan Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) process. Prime Minister Sharif reiterated the importance of market access for Pakistan as the most effective, mutually beneficial, and durable form of bilateral economic partnership. The leaders

recognized the success of the Joint Action Plan to expand trade and investment, established after Prime Minister Sharif's 2013 visit, and acknowledged their intent to augment the plan. President Obama conveyed that Pakistani companies are eligible to participate in U.S. Department of Defense procurement opportunities related to Afghanistan:U.S. military forces:Deploymentoperations in Afghanistan, in accordance with U.S. law and regulation, and encouraged Pakistan to pursue accession to the General Procurement Agreement of the World Trade Organization. The leaders also noted the U.S.-Pakistan Memorandum of Understanding on Women's Economic Empowerment and Entrepreneurship, signed at the 2014 TIFA, which includes the efforts of the U.S.-Pakistan Women's Council.

The leaders reaffirmed their commitment to advancing economic connectivity between Pakistan and its neighbors to promote regional prosperity. The President reaffirmed U.S. support for the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement, the Central Asia South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (CASA–1000) electricity corridor, the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) natural gas pipeline project, and other measures to enhance regional economic connectivity and growth. President Obama welcomed Pakistan's accession to the TIR Convention, which could facilitate trade throughout the region. Both leaders acknowledged that strengthening Pakistan's trade and transit ties with its neighbors is needed to promote prosperity in Pakistan and the region.

Education and Civil Society Cooperation

President Obama and Prime Minister Sharif emphasized the value of investing in higher and basic education. Reflecting this, the United States and Pakistan re-instituted an Education, Science and Technology Working Group under the bilateral Strategic Dialogue, and in June, launched three University Centers for Advanced Studies in agriculture, energy, and water research. This is in addition to nineteen existing university partnerships between U.S. and Pakistani institutions and the highest-funded Fulbright scholarship program in the world. Welcoming the establishment of the "U.S.-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor" in June 2015, the two leaders directed their respective governments to intensify cooperation within this important framework in consonance with the priorities set out in Pakistan's Vision 2025. In the near term, the two governments intend to double joint funding for a new round of research grants under the U.S.-Pakistan Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement.

Building on important cooperation in basic education to date, the Leaders welcomed the launch of the Let Girls Learn Initiative in Pakistan, a global effort led by the United States, which will provide 200,000 Pakistani girls access to education and the tools they need to succeed in life.

The President commended Prime Minister Sharif's commitment to education as a priority, demonstrated through the doubling of Pakistan's higher education budget since 2013 and the government's goal of doubling expenditures for education from two percent to four percent of gross domestic product by 2018.

The Leaders recognized the importance of civil society to the fundamental health and stability of all democratic societies. International nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) and civil society groups can contribute toward the promotion of Pakistan's national development goals and can complement the work of the government to address the needs of the underprivileged populations, promote human rights, and strengthen democratic governance. The Prime Minister mentioned that recently issued policy guidelines were intended by the Government of Pakistan to facilitate the functioning of INGOs, and further stated that these guidelines will be reviewed and implemented in consultation with all stakeholders. The President noted that policy guidelines governing INGOs should be transparent and consistent with international norms so as to facilitate the important work of these organizations.

Climate Change and Energy

President Obama reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to strong cooperation in the energy

sector. The leaders announced the formation of a new U.S.-Pakistan Clean Energy Partnership, based on the initial work of the April 2015 Energy Working Group under the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue. At its core, the Partnership aims to facilitate private sector investment in Pakistan's energy sector, including generation, transmission, and distribution. Through the Partnership, the United States and Pakistan will cooperate to: attract local and international investment; develop an investment plan for expanding the role of clean energy systems; expand transmission capacity through selected infrastructure projects; and mobilize development financing to help attract private sector investments in hydropower, wind, solar, and natural gas projects. The two leaders noted their cooperation in the development of Pakistan's domestic oil and gas resources and liquefied natural gas sectors. President Obama expressed support for Pakistan's efforts to secure funding for the DiamerBhasha and Dasu dams to help meet Pakistan's energy and water needs.

President Obama and Prime Minister Sharif expressed their commitment to press for an ambitious agreement on climate change at the Paris Climate Conference in December. The United States and Pakistan welcome the fact that the United States has communicated its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) and that Pakistan stated its plan to soon submit its INDC. The leaders underscored the importance of longer-range efforts to transition to low-carbon economies and of continued, robust financial support to help developing countries build low-carbon and climate-resilient societies. Further, to advance global efforts to address a leading cause of climate change, President Obama and Prime Minister Sharif affirmed that their respective countries intend to work together to amend the Montreal Protocol this year to curb the production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons.

Both sides stressed the importance of adaptation to the adverse impacts of climate change. As a country particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, Pakistan has suffered major floods, heat waves, and droughts in recent years. President Obama offered continued U.S. support to Pakistan to build infrastructure and organizational capacity to counter natural disasters and provide relief to the affected populations.

Promoting Global Health

President Obama and Prime Minister Sharif discussed the importance of enhancing measurable capability of Pakistan to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious diseases. Building from that shared understanding, they reaffirmed their commitment to fully implement the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA), including a mutually-developed five-year plan to achieve the GHSA targets and advance the World Health Organization International Health Regulations, with a view to advance global cooperation across sectors to counter biological threats, whether naturally occurring, accidental or deliberate. President Obama and Prime Minister Sharif also discussed efforts to improve the health of mothers and children in Pakistan and globally.

Regional Security and Counterterrorism

President Obama condemned the December 2014 terrorist attack by the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in which 140 school children were killed.

The leaders discussed the importance of continued cooperation against terrorists and violent extremist groups. President Obama affirmed Pakistan's role as a key counterterrorism partner and recognized the sacrifices that Pakistani civilians, military, and law enforcement personnel have made over the years as they confront terrorism and militant groups. The President expressed particular appreciation for Pakistan's ongoing support to degrade and ultimately defeat al-Qa'ida and its affiliates, noting that this partnership has helped to decimate the group's leadership and operational capacity and has disrupted plots against the U.S. homeland. The President also honored the sacrifices of the Pakistani security forces in Operation Zarb-e-Azb and other op-

erations, which have degraded the ability of militants to plan and execute terrorist attacks and noted further steps being taken in this regard in line with the National Action Plan. In turn, the Prime Minister thanked the United States for its support in bolstering Pakistan's counter-terrorism capacity.

President Obama and Prime Minister Sharif renewed their common resolve to promote peace and stability throughout the region and to counter all forms of extremism and terrorism.

Both leaders expressed their commitment to advance an Afghan-owned and -led peace and reconciliation process between the Afghan government and the Afghan Taliban, and called on Taliban leaders to enter into direct talks with Kabul and work toward a sustainable peace settlement.

President Obama commended Pakistan for hosting and facilitating the first public talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban in July 2015 and highlighted the opportunity presented by Pakistan's willingness to facilitate a reconciliation process that would help end insurgent violence in Afghanistan. Prime Minister Sharif reaffirmed that Pakistan's territory will not be used against any other country and noted that this is an obligation of all countries in the region. Both leaders affirmed that regional peace and stability required the prevention of attacks across the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. The Prime Minister outlined the actions that Pakistan is taking under the National Action Plan to ensure that the Taliban—including the Haqqani Network—are unable to operate from the soil of Pakistan. The leaders reaffirmed that coordinated management of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border and orderly return of Afghan refugees from Pakistan are fundamental to enhancing security.

President Obama and Prime Minister Sharif stressed that improvement in Pakistan-India bilateral relations would greatly enhance prospects for lasting peace, stability, and prosperity in the region.

The two leaders expressed concern over violence along the Line of Control, and noted their support for confidence-building measures and effective mechanisms that are acceptable to both parties. The leaders emphasized the importance of a sustained and resilient dialogue process between the two neighbors aimed at resolving all outstanding territorial and other disputes, including Kashmir, through peaceful means and working together to address mutual concerns of India and Pakistan regarding terrorism. In this context, the Prime Minister apprised the President about Pakistan's resolve to take effective action against United Nations-designated terrorist individuals and entities, including Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and its affiliates, as per its international commitments and obligations under UN Security Council resolutions and the Financial Action Task Force.

Acknowledging the ongoing critical counterterrorism efforts that have driven the robust U.S.-Pakistan security cooperation since September 11, 2001, President Obama and Prime Minister Sharif affirmed that this security relationship has been and will continue to be integral to regional stability. Both leaders noted that the stability of South Asia depended on cooperation among all neighbors to suppress all extremist and militant groups operating in the region.

Highlighting the quickly evolving extremist landscape from the Sahel to South Asia, the President and Prime Minister noted with satisfaction that the United States and Pakistan are working closely to counter emerging terrorist groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)/Da'esh in South Asia. The Prime Minister reiterated Pakistan's firm resolve not to allow any ISIL/Da'esh footprint in Pakistan. The leaders also reiterated their commitment to combat the extremist ideology that propels such groups.

President Obama raised his concern regarding the U.S. nationals being held hostage by terrorist groups in the region. The Prime Minister indicated that Pakistan would assist in every way possible with the safe return of American and other hostages.

Defense Cooperation

Taking note of the robust bilateral defense cooperation between their two countries, including recent military engagements, exercises, and consultations on regional security, President Obama and Prime Minister Sharif expressed satisfaction with the cooperation achieved in defense relations and reaffirmed that this partnership should endure.

Prime Minister Sharif conveyed appreciation for U.S. security assistance in support of Pakistan's counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency, counter-narcotics, and maritime security operations and expressed hope of broadening bilateral defense cooperation in areas that serve the two countries' mutual interest. President Obama noted Pakistan's positive efforts to counter improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and both leaders resolved to continue working together to disrupt the threat posed by these devices. They recognized that a stable and peaceful Pakistan-Afghanistan border was important for the success of counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and counter-IED efforts. They also underscored the critical significance of effective border coordination mechanisms between Pakistan and Afghanistan in achieving these objectives. The two leaders reaffirmed that the defense consultative group mechanism has been critical in stimulating defense partnership and resolved to explore new avenues of enhancing defense collaboration.

Cybersecurity

Recognizing the opportunities and challenges presented by information and communications technologies, President Obama and Prime Minister Sharif affirmed that international cooperation is essential to make cyberspace secure and stable. Both leaders endorsed the consensus report of the 2015 UN Group of Governmental Experts in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security. The leaders looked forward to further multilateral engagement, and discussion of cyber issues as part of the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue.

Strategic Stability, Nuclear Security, and Non-proliferation

President Obama and Prime Minister Sharif recognized the shared interest in strategic stability in South Asia. The two leaders underscored that all sides should continuously act with maximum restraint and work jointly toward strengthening strategic stability in South Asia. They acknowledged the importance of regional balance and stability in South Asia and pursuing increased transparency and uninterrupted dialogue in support of peaceful resolution of all outstanding disputes.

President Obama and Prime Minister Sharif discussed the continuing threat of nuclear terrorism. The United States and Pakistan committed to work together to make the Nuclear Security Summit hosted by President Obama next year a success. President Obama welcomed Pakistan's constructive engagement with the Nuclear Security Summit process and its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency and other international forums.

The leaders noted Pakistan's efforts to improve its strategic trade controls and enhance its engagement with multilateral export control regimes. Recognizing the importance of bilateral engagement in the Security, Strategic Stability and Non-Proliferation Working Group, the two leaders noted that both sides will continue to stay engaged to further build on the ongoing discussions in the working group.

Conclusion

The two leaders affirmed their common resolve to continue working together to address the issues of greatest interest to both nations. Building on the foundation of the Enhanced Partnership for Pakistan Act, President Obama reiterated a commitment to comprehensive bilateral cooperation through both the public and private sectors, into the future. The leaders committed to fostering a deeper, stronger, multi-dimensional partnership based on mutual respect, trust and understanding to cooperatively tackle the global challenges of the 21st century.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks During a Panel Discussion on Criminal Justice Reform
October 22, 2015

The President. Well, first of all, Bill, thanks for moderating this. Thank you to the Marshall Project. I am particularly grateful to folks in law enforcement, some Members of Congress who are here, people in prosecutors' offices, all of whom have taken a great interest in this.

And as I said backstage before we came out, I do think that we're in a unique moment in which, on a bipartisan basis, across the political spectrum, people are asking hard questions about our criminal justice system and how can we make it both smart, effective, just, fair.

You're right, Bill, that reform encompasses a whole bunch of stuff, and not everybody is going to have the same views on every issue. But I do think there are certain principles that my administration—our esteemed Attorney General Loretta Lynch and her Deputy and others—are pursuing. And there I do think that there's some rough agreement.

Number one, I think there's a recognition that our criminal justice system should treat people fairly regardless of race, wealth, station; that there has to be a consistency in the application of the law. I think that's an area where people agree.

And so when I came into office, and we saw a huge variance in how crack cocaine was being treated versus powder cocaine, people immediately asked the question, why is that—particularly given that there might be differences in demographics in terms of who uses it—and that would be an example of an area where we had to reform it. And we still haven't gotten it where it probably needs to be, but we made a change. So one is fairness.

Number two, proportionality. I think one of the things that has come up again and again in the discussions of reform is, in any criminal justice system, we want to make sure that the punishment fits the crime. And if we know, for example, that someone engaged in a nonviolent drug crime should be punished, but that their sentence should not probably be longer than a rapist or a murderer, and yet that's not what our sentencing guidelines reflect, then that's a problem. So proportionality is a second issue that I'm concerned about.

Number three is a recognition that incarceration is just one tool in how we think about reducing crime and violence and making our communities safe. And if that's the only tool—if we think we only have a hammer, then everything becomes a nail—then we're missing opportunities for us to create safer communities through drug diversion and treatment, for example, or through more effective reentry programs or getting to high school kids or middle school or elementary school kids earlier so that they don't get in trouble in the first place and how are we resourcing that. So that's a third area.

Connected to that is, where are we spending our money? We know we're spending $80 billion a year incarcerating folks. If in fact we had smarter sentencing, we thought about how we're dealing with drug offenses more intelligently, we are working on evidence-based approaches to rehabilitation and reducing recidivism, and that leads us to save money that then, in turn, we can put on the streets to have a greater police presence, to cultivate better community-police relations, to focus prosecutors' attention or police officers' attention on the truly dangerous criminals, then aren't we better off and isn't that what we should be pursuing?

So those are the kinds of areas where I think there is actually rough agreement. Now, obviously, the devil is always in the details here, and there are going to be some disagreements on how successful is drug diversion, and can we, in fact, significantly reduce the prison population if we're only focusing on nonviolent offenses, where part of the reason that in some countries—in Europe, for example—they have a lower incarceration rate because they also don't sentence violent offenders for such long periods of time.

Those are all legitimate debates. And I think that part of what our administration is trying to do is look at the data, figure out what we know works, what we don't.

And the final point I'll make—and I've said this before with respect to criminal justice reform—we can't put the entire onus of the problem on law enforcement. One of the—I think there's been a healthy debate around police-community relations and some of the episodes that we've seen around the country, but we, as a society, if we are not investing in opportunity for poor kids, and then we expect just the police to—and prosecutors to keep them out of sight and out of mind, that's a failed strategy. That's a failure on our part, as a whole.

And so part of what we've also been trying to do—and this goes to the prevention issue—is think about where are the communities that are most vulnerable. I was in West Virginia yesterday, talking about the opioid epidemic. Heartbreaking stories that you'd hear from parents about their children first getting OxyContin or Vicodin maybe from a medicine cabinet, and suddenly, they are hooked. They move on to heroin. And there was a consensus, we need to spend more of our time on treatment and not just on incarceration as a strategy.

And I pointed out to them that part of what makes this an area where maybe those of us who are better off or middle class are more sympathetic is because it seems more like our kids are vulnerable as well. But of course, that's illusory. If kids in the inner city are not getting treatment and opportunity, that's as much of a problem as if it's happening to our kids. And we've got to think of all our children in that same way.

And I'm encouraged by the fact, in particular, that law enforcement is making this point over and over again, because they have the credibility because of the courage and the hard work and they're on the front lines.

So, with that, I should probably make sure that the chief actually gets a word in. [*Laughter*]

Marshall Project Editor-in-Chief Bill Keller. There's a lot in there that we—I'd like to pick up on as we go through the allotted time. And I think I'll start with the question of sentencing, these draconian sentences that we apply to so many crimes, in part because that's the subject matter of the legislation that just today passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

A few decades ago, when crime rates were higher and when the only way to get elected to office was to be tougher on crime than your opponent, Congress began restricting the license the judges had in making their sentences. They established mandatory minimum sentences for a number of crimes. They tightened up the safety valve. And that seems to now be recognized as the pendulum having swung too far in one direction. So it's beginning to swing back a little bit in the other direction.

The bill that passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee today does some modest reductions in mandatory minimums. And—sorry, having a senior moment on my thought—but prosecutors love mandatory minimums, as a rule. So this is really a question for you, John. Prosecutors love mandatory minimums because they can use them as leverage to drive plea bargains, because they can use them to turn low-level offenders and get them to rat out their bosses. How far can you go in eliminating or reducing mandatory minimums, do you think? Why not just eliminate them altogether?

United States Attorney for the District of Colorado John F. Walsh. Well, let me first start out by thanking the President and also the Attorney General for their incredible leadership in this area. Part of the reason we have a moment where all of law enforcement and the entire political spectrum are supporting changes to the sentencing regime is the leadership that you have shown and the people in this room have shown, including the—Chief Beck.

Mandatory minimums are an important part of how the Federal system is set up, but since 2013, when the Smart on Crime policy was announced by then-Attorney General Holder, Federal prosecutors have been instructed not to use mandatory minimums except in cases that really merit their attention: in other words, aggravated felons; leaders of drug organizations; violent people. And what's that's meant is that our use of mandatory minimums has probably dropped by about 25 percent in that time. But so far, we have not seen a corre-

sponding drop in the willingness of lower-level conspirators to cooperate with us.

In other words, what we're seeing in the Smart on Crime policy is a direct ability to reduce mandatory sentences while still protecting the public. So the bottom line is—you asked the question, should we eliminate mandatory minimums entirely, and I think the answer to that is no. But we have to reserve their use for the most severe, dangerous, and violent offenders who are out there.

Mr. Keller. Why not eliminate them though? Why not just have sentencing guidelines the way we have now and have had it in the past and leave it to the discretion of judges?

U.S. Attorney Walsh. Well, I certainly think that—part of what prosecutors do is advocate to judges, where that's our job; we're used to it, and I think we're confident about the results we can get. Having said that, there's something to be said for those most aggravated, top-level criminals knowing that they're going to get hit if they get caught with a very severe penalty. But that's different than saying we're going to use mandatory minimums to drive what has turned out to be mass incarceration of relatively low-level offenders in the Federal system.

Similarly, I think on the State side—and I would turn this over to Chief Beck—some of the laws that were enacted on the State side in the 1980s and early nineties also had very heavy penalties. Whether those are necessary in every instance to accomplish the goals of public safety, that's a question that we could debate.

But the bottom line is, I think that from a Federal prosecutor's point of view, keeping mandatory minimums for the most serious offenders still makes sense. But using them very sparingly for less serious offenders also makes sense. That's part of what Smart on Crime is about.

Mr. Keller. Chief, do you want to pick up on that?

Los Angeles Police Department Chief Charles L. Beck. Well, just very briefly, if you view the criminal justice system as a response to a sickness in America, if you view it through the medical aspect, then you have to look at sentencing as a dosage. And I think that we are now experiencing a time in the United States where crime is at a level where we require a different dosage. And we have to recognize that all crimes do not carry the same weight.

And some crimes involve addiction and mental illness and have other pathways that can be more effective than incarceration. And in States across the Nation, some of our prisons and jails are schools for criminality. And to put young people—and it's mainly young people—into those schools for criminality based on minor offenses doesn't make any sense.

So I think we need to stop wasting money and start investing money. And when I talk about investing money—and I'm remiss—I should say that I'm privileged to speak for so many chiefs, so many great chiefs in the audience here, over 50 of them. And we all believe in the same thing: that we need to invest in our future, not continue to use money to lock the future of the United States up. We need to invest in that so that we can move to a place where many of these offenses are looked upon as the illnesses that they are.

Mr. Keller. Your State has been sort of a laboratory in this regard. You're now in the fifth year of a court order to reduce prison populations. Last year, California passed Prop. 47, which reduced a lot of felonies to misdemeanors. What has—how has that played out? What lessons are there for the rest of the States in your experience?

Chief Beck. So I think there's some really, really good lessons to be learned. And I—California often leads the way, and sometimes, we get things absolutely right, and sometimes, things need adjustment. And I think it's important to recognize that what California did in 47 is take several hundred felonies, largely drug-related, and move them to misdemeanors. And a couple of things probably should have been included in that. We also took away progressive prosecutions, so, in other words, you can be arrested and rearrested and rearrested again for the same crime. And even though it's a misdemeanor at this point, there's no enhanced sentencing or enhanced ability to get folks into treatment.

And the other piece is, is there needs to be a stronger lever for the courts to encourage folks to go into treatment. We're realizing that we're dealing largely with addicts here and they don't have self-determination enough to do it, so there needs to be a way to help do that. And then, thirdly and most importantly, there needs to be adequate programs for people to be diverted into. And it does no good in my estimation to arrest for these offenses over and over and over again with no place for them to go, but back onto the street to continue that cycle.

And so one of the things that I would love to see in this discussion is that we all acknowledge the fact that this is not a cost-saving measure. We are—I don't believe that reducing incarceration should be looked at as a way to save money for the—a State or for the Federal Government. I think that should be looked at as a way to develop money to reinvest into the futures of young people, and then, that will, in turn, eventually save money. But in the short term, you've got to have another pathway.

Incarceration Rates/Crime Rates/Sentencing Guidelines for Nonviolent Offenders

Mr. Keller. In your first answer, Mr. President, you touched on the two—what I think of as the two biggest myths about criminal justice reform. One of them Chief Beck has just addressed, which is the idea that it's cheap, that in the end, you can save a lot of money by letting people out of prisons without reinvesting that money. The other is that you can significantly reduce the populations of prisons by letting out low-level drug offenders.

It's true at the Federal level, nearly half of the people who are incarcerated are there for drug crimes. But at the State level, where most people are incarcerated, it's more like 17 percent. Are Americans willing to consider rolling back the sentencing for people who are violent criminals?

The President. Well, first of all, I think it's important to look at the evidence, and there's some conflicting data, but here's what we know: that we increased our prison population fourfold from 1980. And the best social science seems to indicate that, initially, locking up folks who were violent for more certain, longer stretches reduced violence on the streets, but that there was a diminishing return at a certain point and it kind of flattened out. But we just kept on locking folks up, without, at that point, it being the main driver of violent crime reductions.

And we have seen incredible, historic reductions in crime over the last 20 years. I know that there's been some talk in the press about spikes that are happening this year relative to last year, and I've asked my team to look very carefully at it—Attorney General Lynch has pulled together a Task Force—and it does look like there are a handful of cities where we're seeing higher-than-normal spikes. Across the 93 or 95 top cities, it's very hard to distinguish anything statistically meaningful.

Now, that doesn't mean that we don't take seriously what's happening in those cities. But the bottom line is, is that I think there's a strong consensus in the United States of America that you shouldn't be hit over the head when you're walking down the street, that you don't want somebody breaking into your house and threatening your family, that somebody who commits violence we don't have a lot of tolerance for.

I would distinguish between those situations and whether or not giving somebody who's 25 years old a 40-year sentence versus a 15-year sentences is the smart thing to do, particularly because we know that young people do stupid stuff and as they get older, they get a little less stupid. [*Laughter*] I speak from experience. [*Laughter*] That at least was my experience. And now I'm watching my teenage girls, and they're a lot smarter than me, but there are still some gaps in judgment. [*Laughter*]

So here's the bottom line. I think it's smart for us to start the debate around nonviolent drug offenders. You are right that that's not going to suddenly halve our incarceration rate, but if we get that—if we do that right, and we are reinvesting in treatment, and we are reinvesting resources in police departments having more guys and gals on the street who are engaging in community policing and that's im-

proving community relations, then that becomes the foundation upon which the public has confidence in potentially taking a future step and looking at sentencing changes down the road.

So I don't think there's anything wrong with us saying, you know what, violent crime we want to keep down. We are going to be a little more hesitant initially in how we think about sentencing on violent crime than we are nonviolent crime. If we can reduce the prison population by 5 percent in an initial stretch—and by the way, that's not a goal I'm setting, I'm just—that was off the top of my head—but 5 percent, when you've got 2 million prisoners, that's a lot of people, and that's a lot of resources that could be going into other areas.

So I think that this is a staged process. We will lose the public if we try to do everything at once without having data and evidence, and suddenly, you see big spikes in crime again, and then suddenly, we're back into the politics of "Lock them up."

If on the other hand, we do it systematically, methodically, we see what works, we see what doesn't, the chief's point and John's point about reinvesting, I think, is absolutely critical. If we do those things well and we can duplicate what happened last year, which was the first time in 40 years that both the prison population and the crime rate went down at the same time, we start seeing the same kinds of patterns as we're seeing in some of these other States, and the experience we're seeing in the U.S. Attorney's Office where we're not telling prosecutors you're going to be promoted based on how many maximum sentences you get, but rather based on how wise your use of prosecutorial discretion—if all those things prove that we're still doing a good job controlling crime, then I think we've got something to build on.

Mr. Keller. One other drug question. John, you work in a State that has—was one of the first two to legalize recreational use of marijuana. Should Congress take marijuana off the Schedule I list of illegal drugs?

U.S. Attorney Walsh. So I've learned that I always get a marijuana question. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Keller. Sorry to be so predictable.

U.S. Attorney Walsh. The—I want to reiterate something that I think that the President and the administration has made clear, is that the administration is not in favor of the legalization of marijuana. And the decision to move marijuana from Schedule I to a different schedule is really—there's a process behind that. It has to do with the medically accepted uses for the drug.

I will make this comment about the situation in Colorado. One of the things that's been a tremendous, positive development in Colorado is that the State regulatory system has become clearer so that, well, local law enforcement has a good sense of where its lines are and what enforcement action it can take. And that's made our ability to partner with local law enforcement in Federal enforcement of marijuana very much clearer. So we see an evolving situation where I think, again, as in so many things, the key is a Federal-State law enforcement cooperative effort to make sure the system works.

The President's Relations With Congress

Mr. Keller. I'd like to ask both Chief Beck and John Walsh, are there things that the leader of the free world could be doing on his own without the permission of Congress over the next year-and-change of his administration that would make this problem better, less of a problem?

The President. Let me just amend that question—[*laughter*]—because I've got some outstanding Members of Congress here and I want to work with them to get stuff done. So I just wanted to—I get into enough trouble with Congress without Bill trying to stir things up. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Keller. That's why I asked the other guys.

Chief Beck. First I have to say that I'm amazed by the depths of the President's understanding of this issue. I mean, the first answer that you gave covered so many of the points that John and I have talked about in private, and it's obvious that you understand the way that the chiefs in this room and the prosecutors in this room feel about this issue. So that's a huge start, in my opinion.

But I think that one of the things that we need to look at is remember that this system is made up of three parts, this criminal justice system. It's a Federal level, which we're talking about directly here, but most folks are affected by State-level prosecutions, State-level incarceration, or even local—even on the local level.

And so when we talk about having treatment available, when we talk about diversionary systems that we can use to get less people in the jail system, it needs to apply to all three. It can't just be for the use—for the Federal system. It has to go down to the State system—because many of the States and all the municipalities now struggle economically, and putting money into community-based organizations or to some of the things that the States and the counties run is very difficult. And so, if we could get some Federal help with systems that are off-ramps for people that are addicted and off-ramps for people that are arrested for low-level crimes—because the arrests aren't stopping. I mean, the chiefs in here represent tens and tens of thousands of low-level drug offense arrests, my organization included. But we've got to have somewhere for them to go. And it can't just be 48 hours in the local lockup and then right back on the street corner where they came from. It just can't be that.

Mr. Keller. John, have you got any requests of the President?

U.S. Attorney Walsh. The one thing that I would really emphasize: So much of law enforcement really depends on local law enforcement, and our partners in police departments and sheriff's offices all over the country on the Federal side we value tremendously. We can't get our Federal work done without the partnership between Federal law enforcement and State law enforcement.

One area where over the years we've seen a decrease in Federal assistance to State and local law enforcement is in the COPS area, the community policing grants. We have fewer officers on the street with Federal money than we used to have. And that's an area that I think would go a long way to enabling the police departments and sheriffs' offices to engage in that community-oriented policing that really will help prevent crime, so that we're not confronted with the situation of trying to decide how much of a sentence to give a violent offender because maybe we prevented some young person from going down that road in the first place.

Chief Beck. And just not to ignore the opportunity, I have to say that the kinds of programs that I know the President wants, I know the police chiefs out here want, the kind of programs that have maximum community interaction where people know the officer on the street, where officers are not there just to enforce the law, but they're there to build community, those are the most resource-intensive programs that we have.

And I know the President is familiar with a couple of programs we have in Los Angeles, and I thank him for bringing the Tingirides family out here for his State of Union speech. But those kind of things are exactly the kind of programs that we could expand on with a little help.

Mr. Keller. Yes, John.

U.S. Attorney Walsh. And, Bill, there's one other thing that I think is very important: Kind of an amazing number that I only relatively recently became aware of is that we release every year from State and Federal prison 600,000 people. So that's 600,000 prisoners coming back into society every year. Do we have 600,000 people's worth of reentry programs? I don't think so. We have a lot to—we have a lot of work to do in that.

State and local efforts are great. Many of the U.S. attorneys who are present here in this room have been working on developing great reentry programs all over the country. But that's another area where taking some of these savings and putting it into that kind of programming is going to reduce the reoffending rate and really make a big difference.

Criminal Justice Reform/Community-Oriented Policing

Mr. Keller. Let's take a little time to talk about the need to repair the mistrust between police forces and the communities that they serve and protect.

I notice we've solicited questions and thoughts from our readers through social media. And one thing that recurred was a fairly high level of cynicism about the promises that we're all going to do better and—at policing, that we've taken the "Black Lives Matter" movement to heart. There's a—people say the people—the people who are now prescribing a return to community policing are the same people who gave us "stop and frisk" and "broken windows" and these other strategies that, as they were applied in practice, tended to result in overaggressive policing. And I guess the kind of cynical question from the masses would be, why should we trust you to get it right this time?

The President. I'm actually going to—Chief, I'm going to interject before you——

Chief Beck. Thank you, sir.

The President. ——before you have to answer this because—[*laughter*]. No, no, no—well, and the reason I say this is because it goes to something I said earlier, and that is, when you look at, for example, racial bias in the criminal justice system, the criminal justice system and our law enforcement systems are reflections of us. And so, if we, as a society, are willing to tolerate very poor neighborhoods with no opportunity, a lot of violence, a lot of substandard education, and then, we're surprised that the police, in interacting with a community that hasn't been cared for, is going to have tougher interactions, then we're passing the buck.

Now, I take very seriously, as I said before, the need for fairness in our criminal justice system. And Bill—we did a little interview before I came out here, and he—Bill asked, what had been your experiences. And I fessed up. I have—as a young man, there have been times where I was driving, and I got stopped, and I didn't know why. But I want to make sure that when we approach this issue, we recognize that it's not all on the police and everybody else can just sit back and opine. The community and the society and the city and the State and the Nation have to be partners with the police so that we're not giving them impossible jobs. Because they have the right to come home, too, to their families.

I will say this, that where I've seen really smart community policing that rebuilds trust, there is a commitment not only to train police more effectively and make sure that there is accountability if there is misconduct and that there is data being collected around who is being targeted and there are independent investigations when excessive force may have been used, but there's also a commitment typically to the kinds of treatment programs, the kinds of partnerships with the schools, with businesses getting involved, opportunities being provided to young people. And as a consequence, everybody is taking responsibility for this. And the police become part of a team to eliminate bias in a system.

The problem of racial justice or injustice in the society has been a running theme in this country's history for a very long time. And so we just have to make sure that all of us own it.

Now, with that, I do want all the chiefs to look at the Task Force recommendations we've put forward post-Ferguson because there are specific things that police officers—police departments and police officers can do to rebuild trust. And I don't want to let them off the hook, because there are some real problems in certain jurisdictions that we've seen, and I don't think the chief or any of the chiefs here would deny that.

Chief Beck. No, we certainly wouldn't. And I think it's important to recognize that the chiefs that are in this room, many of whom are—if not all of whom—I know have been talking about community trust for a decade. I've been the chief for a mere 6 years, but when I came into the organizations—Major City Chiefs, IACP—this was a common theme of our discussion. This is not a new topic to us.

The President is exactly right: We are a reflection of a much larger issue in America. There is racial disparity in housing, in employment, in the entire economic system. It is not just in incarceration and in policing. And we have to look at these things in the totality and address them as a nation. And we will do our part.

And I thank the President for the Task Force. I was lucky enough to be a part of it. I think that there's some very solid recommendations that we all take to heart are being made. We know we can do better. But we have to recognize that we have a country where things are not always equal. And we can fix that. We can work on that. But we've all got to work on it. It's not just the cops, it's everybody.

And, Mr. President, I've been stopped several times too; I always knew why. [*Laughter*]

The President. There are a number of times where I knew why also. [*Laughter*] I don't want to suggest that every stop was uncalled for. [*Laughter*] There were times where I checked my odometer, and I took that—I just took that ticket.

Criminal Justice Reform/Community-Oriented Policing

Mr. Keller. Mr. President, you referred to this earlier as a moment, an opportunity. And it's clearly true that people are paying more attention to it; we now have bipartisan, sort of, cross-ideological arguments in favor of reforming the system. How durable is that moment? Do you worry at all that we might find ourselves a year down the road, there's a spike in crime, there's a Willie Horton-style horror story? Or people don't just want to spend the money that it would take to fix the system, and we declare that what passed the Senate Judiciary Committee today was victory, mission accomplished, and we move onto something else?

The President. I think those are all real dangers, and we have to guard against those dangers—which is why I said that rather than think that we're going to all solve this overnight and then when it's not—when it doesn't get all solved overnight, we're disappointed, I'm much more interested in a sustained, steady process where we're bringing people together, we're listening to everybody. And we're trying to maybe start with some low-hanging fruit and then we get deeper into it, and we figure out more of what works and what doesn't. We're balancing that against the public's primary interest, which is making sure that they're safe. And by the way, that's in poor communities and Black communities as much as anybody.

I mean, historically, when you look at it, one of the ironies here is, is that when you look at racial bias in the law enforcement and criminal justice system, historically, it was underpolicing in African American communities. The attitude was let them do whatever they want as long as they're not coming into our neighborhoods.

And there are hard-working, wonderful families and kids who—they want to be safe. They want to be in partnership with the police. They just want to make sure that a police officer is properly trained so that just because a kid has a hoodie, they have—partly because they know the community, they don't automatically assume, well, that must be somebody I should arrest or frisk, and I can distinguish between kids the same way we—in their own neighborhood they can distinguish between kids who are really causing trouble and kids who are just being kids. So I think the moment is here, but we've got to build on it, and we've got to be systematic about it.

Couple things that haven't been said that I want to emphasize. Collecting data, I think, is something that's going to be very important in guiding us forward. And John was talking about Federal, State, and local cooperation; we don't really do a good job right now in collecting national data on a real-time basis, but we now have the tools and the technology to do it better.

And the better our data, the better we can target where is real crime going on, where are we seeing maybe some problems in police-community interactions that we can catch ahead of time—it's transparent so the community then has trust because they're seeing, all right, here are—here's what's been happening, and so we're initiating both internally at the Federal level, but also reaching out to departments to figure out, how do we get a national database that's more effective? That's point number one.

Point number two: We've got the outstanding chief of Camden, who I had a chance to visit, a great example of community policing

and data driving down crime, and regaining trust from the community. I mean, the chief here has got sort of a war room that has cameras on some of the hotspots around the city, but it's not considered Big Brother because they've set up software where the community can direct the cameras so that they don't feel like they're being spied on from the outside, but rather it's a tool for the community to monitor what's happening. They're, then, sending that in, and the chief has trained—retrained his entire department.

First thing they did when they came—they brought in new recruits, they just put them in the neighborhoods where they're going to be serving, and they had to walk basically for 24 hours, right? And if they needed to go to the restroom, they needed to get to know some people. [*Laughter*] And so they started meeting local businesses. Creative work, like, for example, where they know there were hotspots and some gang shootings related to drugs, the chief takes some forfeiture money, I think it was, and—this was one of my favorite stories, because it's smart, it shows us thinking—purchases two ice cream trucks, has police officers drive the ice cream trucks, park them where the drug dealing has been going on, giving out free ice cream from the police—suddenly, families are out on the streets, and now it's creating a space in which it's a lot harder for you to just be dealing drugs.

And by the—and the chief talks about sometimes, we know who the drug dealers are, and instead of arresting them—where they're just going to be released—he's going to have an officer stand right next to them and talking to them and asking them why are you doing this.

And so the point is, is that the use of technology or the use of data, combined with smart community policing, really can have an impact, really can make a difference. But my hope coming out of all these efforts, including the legislation, is that we put an emphasis on what works and we're not blinded by ideology and we're not blinded by fear. All this talk that's getting hyped about this huge spike in violent crime, this is where you have to step back and say, all right, let's understand statistics: 2014 was a historic low in violent crime. So, if there's a spike in some cities, that's something we have to take seriously and pay attention to, but that doesn't automatically suddenly translate into this notion that a crime wave is coming, because it's still lower this year than it was for every year between 1995 and 2013. It's just, it may be that last year was the anomaly. And that's an example of us having to make sure that we're not being driven by fear or bias in how we approach this problem. But we're looking at facts and trying to figure out what works and what doesn't.

Mr. Keller. Our timekeeper, Carly, has just held up a sign that says "stop." [*Laughter*]

The President. Uh-oh.

Mr. Keller. Actually, she held up about two-thirds of the way through your last answer, but I figured——

The President. It's okay.

Mr. Keller. ——we probably didn't want to put her job at risk by trying shutting you off.

The President. This is my house. [*Laughter*] So I can go over time, generally. But maybe we can hear from the chief and John and maybe get some closing thoughts.

Chief Beck. I just think this is a tremendous opportunity for law enforcement and the justice system in America. We—out of crisis comes opportunity, and right now we do have a crisis of confidence. And there's a tremendous opportunity for us to do better at putting out our message, at about making sure that people are treated fairly and at making sure that we're effective law enforcement. And this will be looked at in history as a door that was open, and hopefully, we will walk through it together.

U.S. Attorney Walsh. I just want to echo a comment that the Chief made a moment ago, which is I'm just amazed by the command of this area that the President has got among the million other things that he does.

The—I would say, to go back to your first question, Bill—what is success—in the end, we have an opportunity. This is a moment in time, and I think we're taking advantage of it collectively to both reduce the rates of incarceration and make our communities safer by taking the savings and investing it in prevention, in

effective community-oriented enforcement, and in reentry programs. I think we can do that. And with the leadership of the President, the Attorney General, and all the people here, both in Congress and in local—and in Federal law enforcement, we're well down that road.

"Black Lives Matter" Movement

The President. And because it's my house, I'm going to take one last—I want to drive down—drive home one point, and that is the relationship between race and the criminal justice system, because this is where sometimes politics intrudes.

"Black Lives Matter" is a social media movement that had tried to gel around Ferguson and the Eric Garner case and some other cases that came up. And very rapidly, it was posited as being in opposition to the police. And sometimes, like any of these loose organizations, some people pop off and say dumb things. And the—on the other hand, though, it started being lifted up as these folks are opposed to police and they're opposed to cops and all lives matter. So the notion was somehow saying Black lives matter was reverse racism or suggesting that other people's lives didn't matter or police officers' lives didn't matter.

And whenever we get bogged down in that kind of discussion, we know where that goes. I mean, that's just down the old track. So let me just suggest this. I think everybody understands all lives matter. Everybody wants strong, effective law enforcement. Everybody wants their kids to be safe when they're walking to school. Nobody wants to see police officers, who are doing their job fairly, hurt. Everybody understands it's a dangerous job.

When—I think the reason that the organizers used the phrase "Black Lives Matter" was not because they said—they were suggesting nobody else's lives matter; rather, what they were suggesting was there is a specific problem that is happening in the African American community that's not happening in other communities. And that is a legitimate issue that we've got to address.

I forget which French writer said there was a law that was passed that really was equal because both rich and poor were forbidden from stealing loaves of bread and sleeping under the bridge. [*Laughter*] Well, so here's—that's not a good definition of equality.

The situation—there is a specific concern as to whether African Americans are sometimes not treated in particular jurisdictions fairly or subject to excessive force more frequently. I think it's important for those who are concerned about that to back it up with data, not anecdote; to not paint with a broad brush; to understand the overwhelming majority of law enforcement is doing the right thing and wants to do the right thing; to recognize that police officers have a really tough job and we're sending them into really tough neighborhoods that sometimes are really dangerous and they've got to make split-second decisions. And so we shouldn't be too sanctimonious about situations that sometimes can be ambiguous.

But having said all that, we as a society, particularly given our history, have to take this seriously. And one of the ways of avoiding the politics of this and losing the moment is everybody just stepping back for a second and understanding that the African American community is not just making this up and they're—it's not just something being politicized; it's real and there's a history behind it. And we have to take it seriously. And it's incumbent then on the activist to also take seriously the tough job that police have. And that's one of the things that the Ferguson—post-Ferguson Task Force did. We had activists from—who were marching in Ferguson with police chiefs and law enforcement, sitting down and figuring this stuff out.

And just assuming good faith in other people—going to the issue of people being cynical—I think is important. I've rarely gotten much accomplished assuming the worst in other people. Usually, it works better if I assume the best. So I just wanted to make that point. All right.

Mr. Keller. Thank you. I guess I'm here as the representative of the cynical profession.

The President. Yes, you are. Absolutely. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Keller. But I would just like to say there are a few issues I feel less cynical about. I do worry—I share the worry you have that this evaporates because of short attention spans. And I guess it's on us in the news media in part to make to make sure that that doesn't happen.

The President. Good. Well, thank you for hosting this. And thanks to everybody here in attendance and the chiefs for the good work you're doing.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:36 p.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Deputy Attorney General Sally Quillian Yates; and J. Scott Thompson, chief, Camden County Police Department. Chief Beck referred to Sgt. Emada Tingirides and Capt. Phil Tingirides, Los Angeles Police Department officers whose family was placed under police protection during an investigation concerning threats made against them in connection with Capt. Tingirides's role on an internal disciplinary committee that led to the firing of another police officer. He also referred to the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). Mr. Keller referred to Willie Horton, a convicted felon who was sentenced for crimes committed during a weekend furlough program in Massachusetts in 1986; and White House Intern Carly Lindgren.

Remarks on Vetoing the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016
October 22, 2015

As President and Commander in Chief, my first and most important responsibility is keeping the American people safe. And that means that we make sure that our military is properly funded and that our men and women in uniform get the support, the equipment, the support for their families that they need and deserve when they protect our freedom and our safety.

The bill that has been presented to me authorizing our defense—excuse me—the bill that's before me, authorizing our defense spending for this year, does a number of good things. It makes sure that our military is funded. It has some important provisions around reform of our military retirement system, which is necessary to make sure that it is stable and effective. It's got some cybersecurity provisions that are necessary; that's an increasing threat.

Unfortunately, it falls woefully short in three areas. Number one, it keeps in place the sequester that is inadequate for us to properly fund our military in a stable, sustained way and allows all of our Armed Forces to plan properly. I have repeatedly called on Congress to eliminate the sequester and make sure that we're providing certainty to our military so they can do out-year planning, ensure military readiness, ensure our troops are getting what they need. This bill instead resorts to gimmicks that does not allow the Pentagon to do what it needs to do.

Number two, unfortunately, it prevents a wide range of reforms that are necessary for us to get our military modernized and able to deal with the many threats that are presenting themselves in the 21st century. We have repeatedly put forward a series of reforms eliminating programs that the Pentagon does not want; Congress keeps on stepping them back in, and we end up wasting money. We end up diverting resources from things that we do need to have the kind of equipment and training and readiness that are necessary for us to meet all potential threats.

And the third thing is that this legislation specifically impedes our ability to close Guantanamo in a way that I have repeatedly argued is counterproductive to our efforts to defeat terrorism around the world. Guantanamo is one of the premiere mechanisms for jihadists to recruit. It's time for us to close it. It is outdated; it's expensive; it's been there for years. And we can do better in terms of keeping our people safe while making sure that we are consistent with our values.

So I'm going to be vetoing this authorization bill. I'm going to be sending it back to Congress. And my message to them is very simple: Let's do this right. We're in the midst of budget discussions. Let's have a budget that properly funds our national security as well as economic security. Let's make sure that we're able, in a constructive way, to reform our military spending to make it sustainable over the long term. And let's make sure that, in a responsible way, we can draw down the populations in Guantanamo, make sure that the American people are safe, and make sure that we're not providing the kinds of recruitment tools to terrorists that are so dangerous.

[*At this point, the President signed the message to the House of Representatives returning the bill, H.R. 1735, without approval.*]

There you go. All good? Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:52 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016
October 22, 2015

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 1735, the "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016." While there are provisions in this bill that I support, including the codification of key interrogation-related reforms from Executive Order 13491 and positive changes to the military retirement system, the bill would, among other things, constrain the ability of the Department of Defense to conduct multi-year defense planning and align military capabilities and force structure with our national defense strategy, impede the closure of the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, and prevent the implementation of essential defense reforms.

This bill fails to authorize funding for our national defense in a fiscally responsible manner. It underfunds our military in the base budget, and instead relies on an irresponsible budget gimmick that has been criticized by members of both parties. Specifically, the bill's use of $38 billion in Overseas Contingency Operations funding—which was meant to fund wars and is not subject to budget caps—does not provide the stable, multi-year budget upon which sound defense planning depends. Because this bill authorizes base budget funding at sequestration levels, it threatens the readiness and capabilities of our military and fails to provide the support our men and women in uniform deserve. The decision reflected in this bill to circumvent rather than reverse sequestration further harms our national security by locking in unacceptable funding cuts for crucial national security activities carried out by non-defense agencies.

I have repeatedly called upon the Congress to work with my Administration to close the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and explained why it is imperative that we do so. As I have noted, the continued operation of this facility weakens our national security by draining resources, damaging our relationships with key allies and partners, and emboldening violent extremists. Yet in addition to failing to remove unwarranted restrictions on the transfer of detainees, this bill seeks to impose more onerous ones. The executive branch must have the flexibility, with regard to those detainees who remain at Guantanamo, to determine when and where to prosecute them, based on the facts and circumstances of each case and our national security interests, and when and where to transfer them consistent with our national security and our humane treatment policy. Rather than taking steps to bring this chapter of our history to a close, as I have repeatedly called upon the Congress to do, this bill aims to extend it.

The bill also fails to adopt many essential defense reforms, including to force structure, weapons systems, and military health care. Our defense strategy depends on investing every dollar where it will have the greatest effect. My Administration's proposals will accomplish this through critical reforms that divest unneeded force structure, slow growth in compensation, and reduce wasteful overhead. The restrictions in the bill would require the Department of Defense to retain unnecessary force structure and weapons systems that we cannot afford in today's fiscal environment, contributing to a military that will be less capable of responding effectively to future challenges.

Because of the manner in which this bill would undermine our national security, I must veto it.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
October 22, 2015.

Remarks at the Democratic National Committee Women's Leadership Forum Annual Issues Conference
October 23, 2015

The President. Hello, Democrats! Hello! Well——

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you too. Thank you. All right, if you have a seat, have a seat. Some of you don't, so—[*laughter*]. It is so good to be with all of you. Now, look, I like being in a room of Democrats, generally. I especially like being in a room of Democratic women. [*Laughter*]

Let me begin by saying that nobody works harder to strengthen this party up and down the ballot, in all 50 States, than our chair, Debbie Wasserman Schultz. And Debbie is—couldn't be here today because she's working to build up our party in Tennessee. She is relentless. She's got incredible partners in the CEO of the DNC, Amy Dacey—where's Amy? She's around here somewhere. Give Amy a big round of applause. She's working hard. And the Women's Leadership Forum cofounders, Cynthia Friedman and Carol Pensky.

So it is good to see all of you. Many of you have been friends for a long time, and then, there are some of you who were 4 when I—[*laughter*]—first ran for the Presidency. She's all, like, no, I was 5. [*Laughter*] The point, though, is, is that all of you are working hard to make sure that our party and our country moves forward.

And for the younger people here—let me refresh your memory—when we came together 7 years ago, we did so not just to elect a President, but to reaffirm our faith in that most fundamental, basic American ideal that people who love this country can change it. A lot of you were involved in that movement. A lot of you have stayed involved ever since. And that faith sometimes has been tested: by war and recession and by politics and by obstruction and by a lot of cynics who said it was foolish for us to keep believing, that it was naive for us to keep on trying. But thanks to folks like you, thanks to Americans like you, this country is moving forward.

I mean, just think about the path we've traveled. What——

[*At this point, a baby cried out.*]

Yes! Yes. [*Laughter*] When I took office, we were losing 800,000 jobs a month, unemployment rate was on its way to 10 percent. Today, during the course of the longest streak of job growth on record, our businesses have created 13.2 million new jobs; unemployment is now at 5.1 percent.

When I took office, more than 15 percent of Americans went without the security of health insurance. Today, we've covered another 17 million Americans. For the first time on record, more than 90 percent of Americans have coverage. And for everybody who already had coverage, now insurance companies can't

discriminate because of a preexisting condition or charge women more just for being a woman.

When I took office, we were hopelessly addicted to foreign oil. We've cut our oil imports by half. We have doubled the production of clean energy, tripled the amount of wind power we generate; 20 times more solar energy is now created than when I came into office. And all that is generating good jobs that can't be outsourced and helping the environment.

When I took office, our influence around the world was at a nadir, our standing was diminished. Today, America is leading the world in confronting new threats, making sure Iran doesn't get a nuclear weapon. America is leading the world in global action on climate change. America is leading the world to write smarter and stronger trade rules for the 21st century. We've begun a new chapter of engagement with the Cuban people. We have brought thousands of our brave troops home to be with their brave families.

So we've made incredible progress on just about every front. You can't find a part of our economic life where we haven't seen significant progress. But we've come here today because we know we still got work to do. We can't just be complacent. We can't rest on our laurels. When cynics told us we couldn't change this country, they were wrong. But we know we've still got work to do.

Marriage equality is now a reality in all 50 States. But we've still got work to do to make sure that our LGBT community is getting fair treatment on the job. High school graduation rates are up, and college graduation rates are up. But we still have to help young people be able to go to college without burdening—being burdened by a mountain of debt. Manufacturing is up. But we still have to do more to make sure that we're training our folks to get these new manufacturing jobs. Our deficits are down. But we've got to make sure that we are making the investments that we need to grow in the future. Our carbon pollution is down. But we're not moving as fast as we need to control climate change. Teen pregnancy rates are down. But we've got a lot of folks who are attacking the right of women just to have basic health care in this country and to be able to make decisions about reproductive freedom without having some Member of Congress or some Governor or some other elected official try to intrude.

Now, the point is, overall, though, we're making enormous progress. And it does make you wonder, why is it that Republican politicians are so down on America? [*Laughter*] Have you noticed that?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I mean, they are gloomy. [*Laughter*] They're like Grumpy Cat. [*Laughter*] Everything is terrible, according to them. We're doomed! [*Laughter*] I mean, I know it's political season, but you listen to them, and they've constructed this entire separate reality. It's like the "Twilight Zone." [*Laughter*] And according to their story, their narrative, everything was terrific back in 2008—[*laughter*]—when unemployment was skyrocketing and uninsured rates were rising and folks were losing their homes and their jobs and we were engaged in two wars and bin Laden was still at large. If you were listening to them, those were like the good old days. [*Laughter*] The golden years. And then, I came in, and the Democrats came in—[*applause*]—no, but according to them, that's when everything all went to heck. [*Laughter*]

Which is strange. I mean, it's a hard argument to make. [*Laughter*] There was an article, I think, in the New York Times today, or maybe it was yesterday, where they pointed out that it's very hard for them to make the arguments they make about tax cuts for the wealthy and doing the same stuff that they've been promoting and trying to eliminate regulations on the big banks and all that when the empirical evidence shows that when Democrats control the White House and we've got a Democratic Congress, the economy does better; and when they're in charge, it does worse. [*Laughter*]

I mean, you just look at the facts. Don't take my word for it. Go back, take a look at, all right, here's Bill Clinton's Presidency, and then, there's Bush Presidency, and then, there's my Presidency, and take a look. [*Laughter*]

And you've got to feel bad for the fact checkers for the Republicans because they've

got to spend hours trying to keep up with some of the crazy stuff that their candidates are claiming. And the reason they have to make up stuff is because they don't have a record to run on. They're offering the same policies that caused so many problems in the first place. They ran on them in 2008. They ran on them in 2012. They're running on them now: more tax cuts for the folks at the very top. Although there is no economic evidence to show that that would grow the economy, they say that's going to grow the economy. Nobody believes it, no economists think it—[*laughter*]—but they insist on it.

Fewer investments in things like education, even though there's no evidence that that would actually improve the lives of the American people. There's a lot of evidence it would make it worse. They want to repeal the Affordable Care Act, which I know is a shocking development. [*Laughter*] Kick millions of hardworking Americans off their health insurance. They've been promising since we passed the Affordable Care Act that they would replace it with something better, except they can't come up with anything except to just have people uninsured.

They want to gut Wall Street reform and risk another crisis by letting the big banks run wild. They want to strip away regulations on polluters, saying that these are job killers, despite the fact, as I already pointed out—did I point out that job growth happens under Democratic administrations and was worse under their administrations? [*Laughter*]

And they even deny that the planet is getting warmer and that our climate is more dangerous. And this is despite evidence to the contrary. They are fighting tooth and nail to unravel new rules on power plants to protect the air that our kids breathe and reduce harmful carbon emissions. And I think what—the way they approach climate change is a good illustration of the problems that they're having. [*Laughter*]

Now, let's just take an example. If you went to 100 doctors, and 99 of them said you are really sick—[*laughter*]—you've got, let's say, high cholesterol—what would you do? Would you say those 99 doctors are crazy and part of a wild-eyed socialist plot to prevent you from eating cheese? [*Laughter*] Or would you say, you know what, I'll bet those doctors know what they're talking about; I've got to modify my diet a little bit.

I mean, we laugh, but this—that's essentially how they're approaching this existential threat to our future. And the truth is, a majority of Republican voters disagree with their own party on this. Washington Republicans are alone on their own shrinking island. [*Laughter*]

So the point is, look, number one, we've got a lot of things to feel good about in this country. And it's a shame when politicians spend all their time trying to make people feel bad or, more typically, trying to make them feel scared, talking down the country all the time because it serves your politics. We don't have time for that. We've got more work to do. And Democrats are the one with the right ideas and the right plans to get the job done. We've got an optimistic vision about where this country can go—if—if the politics of obstruction and fearmongering are set aside. And if we start working together as a country, there's no problem we can't solve.

You've heard from some of our outstanding candidates. I'm going to be supporting whoever the nominee is, and I am confident—[*laughter*]—what are you laughing about? [*Laughter*] We've got some great candidates. But when you watched the debate between the Democrats, it was logical and civil, and people didn't agree with everything, but they weren't just saying crazy stuff. [*Laughter*] And they weren't dividing the country into "us" and "them" and tapping into people's worst impulses. It made me proud because it said that we've got a party that's inclusive and wants everybody to join and get involved and showed that we can disagree without being disagreeable.

As Democrats, our economic plans would actually grow the economy for everybody, not just for folks at the top. We should not even be thinking about something as ridiculous as shutting down our Government over Planned Parenthood. We should be talking about opening up new opportunities, investing in our schools, rebuilding the infrastructure that creates jobs,

investing in the research that alleviates hunger or cures cancer once and for all, like my Vice President Joe Biden said.

The—as Democrats, we're spending time thinking about the concrete challenges that families face. So we have family leave plans that would actually guarantee family leave. We have plans to raise people's wages rather than trying to suppress people's wages. Our plans make sure that women are paid fairly for doing the same work as men, which is why we vote for, not against, a law that would make sure women are paid fairly for doing the same work as men.

As Democrats, our plans to combat climate change actually recognize the existence of climate change. [*Laughter*] And we see—and it's not just a matter of trying to solve a problem—avert danger, it's we see opportunity and jobs in moving to a clean energy economy. We want America to be out front. We embrace our responsibility to leave our kids with a safe, prosperous, habitable planet.

As Democrats, we're proud that our plans to fix our broken immigration system are not rooted in anti-immigrant sentiment. They're rooted in what we know to be our own immigrant stories. We understand that America's greatness doesn't come from building walls, it comes from building up opportunity.

Now, the good news is that there's a broad consensus within our party about what needs to happen. And what's also good news is, the majority of the American people agree with us. But there's a danger coming up, and it's something that we're going to have to address, and that is complacency and cynicism.

A lot of times, it seems like our politics don't reflect the common sense and decency that we see in our neighbors, in our communities, in our friends. And it gets frustrating. We've got a system that too often rewards division and polarization and short-term thinking, and it rewards people for saying the most outrageous things, even though everybody knows they're not true—[*laughter*]—but we think of it as entertainment somehow. And so attention-grabbing and controversy is rewarded, rather than folks who are rolling up their sleeves and dealing with sometimes really complicated issues that don't lend themselves to a sound bite.

And so people get cynical. And sometimes, folks just throw up their hands and say Washington doesn't work, a plague on both your houses, everybody is dysfunctional. [*Laughter*]

Your job is to not succumb to that. Your job, more importantly, is to convince your friends and your neighbors and your communities, your States not to succumb to that. We can't afford that. We've got too much work to do. Our system only works when we realize that government is not some alien thing; government is not some conspiracy or plot; it's not something to oppress you. Government is us in a democracy. Government is us. The most important office in a democracy is the office of citizen. It's you.

And this has been the premise of my politics since we got to know each other, since I started running. [*Laughter*] I always have to remind people—when I ran for office, I didn't say, "I've got this, go home." [*Laughter*] I didn't say, "Yes, I can." I said, "Yes, we can." I said, "Yes, we can." Yes, we can. "We"—we, the people. Yes, we can.

Audience members. Si, se puede!

The President. Si, se puede.

So, moving forward, getting our unfinished business done does not depend on me, or Congress or the Democratic President that we intend to elect next year alone. It depends on all of us. It depends on what we, the people, do together.

And that's why I'm so glad to see these young people here. Because I want you—I want the young people here to poke and prod and remind us, who are getting gray hair—I want you to remind us of that sense of possibility.

Audience member. I will. [*Laughter*]

The President. If you care about all the things that we fight for, you're going to have to be active. You're going to have to be involved. You're going to have to be passionate. And it's not just going to be at events like this. This is easy: coming to a fancy ballroom and schmoozing and listening to the President. [*Laughter*] We need you to go out and organize. We need

you to go out and mobilize. We need you to knock on doors. We need you to work on referendums and ballot initiatives. We need you to work at the local level and at the State level. We need you to inform people. You need to involve people. You need to turn them out to vote.

We've got to make sure that your friends across the country know where their leaders stand. And if they don't know, then inform them and make sure they're doing the right thing and hold them accountable. And if they're not doing the right thing, we've got to vote them out.

So, Democrats, we are at our best and America is at its best when we assume the best in others instead of the bad, when we're willing to try and recognize our own struggles and fears and hopes in other people. When we see some kid struggling to pay for college, we have to feel like that's our kid, or I remember how I had to struggle. When you see an immigrant hoping to contribute, that's my parent or grandparent or great-grandparent. Right? When you see that African American denied the right to vote, you understand, my democracy is at stake when that happens. When a worker is denied a living wage or equal pay for her efforts, that hurts everybody.

Their stories may not be exactly like ours, but we're in the same fight. We care about the same things. We believe in each other. And that's what makes me proud to be a Democrat. We are right on most policy issues. Our arguments are the right ones. But at our core, what I'm really proud of is the fact that we believe in this country that everybody has a fair shot, that everybody has got to be able to get ahead. That we've got a responsibility to uphold those highest ideals, to fight for everybody who hasn't had the same chances that we have. And leave a country to our kids where no matter who you are or what you look like or where you come from or who you love, you can make it if you try.

That's what we stand for as Democrats. That's what we stand for as Americans. That's what's at stake in next year's election. That's why I need you to go out and get busy and get to work.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:10 p.m. at the Grand Hyatt Washington hotel.

Statement on the Resignation of General John R. Allen as Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition To Counter ISIL and the Appointment of Brett H. McGurk as Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition To Counter ISIL

October 23, 2015

I offer my profound gratitude to General John Allen as he prepares to depart his role of Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition To Counter ISIL next month. Thirteen months ago, I asked General Allen once again to postpone his well-earned retirement from government service, including nearly 38 years in the Marines, where he served our country in the Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan, and beyond. I gave him an enormously complex assignment: to build from conception a robust international coalition that would undertake a wide range of political, diplomatic, military, economic, and other efforts to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL.

General Allen has met that challenge with tremendous ability and courage. Thanks in large part to General Allen's tireless work, today the United States is leading a 65-member global coalition that is rolling back ISIL's territorial gains in Iraq and Syria, advising and assisting Iraqi security forces, constricting ISIL's financing, interdicting the flow of foreign fighters, helping stabilize liberated communities, and countering ISIL's heinous message. American leadership of this coalition is making the world a safer place, and we have been fortunate

to have a great patriot like John Allen leading our efforts. I have very much relied on his counsel and leadership and am deeply grateful that he once again answered his Nation's call to serve.

As I thank General Allen for his service, I am pleased to welcome his Deputy, Brett McGurk, as my new Special Presidential Envoy for the counter-ISIL campaign. Brett has been with General Allen at every key moment in this campaign and has long been one of my most trusted advisers on Iraq. Brett has my full support as he continues broadening and deepening our coalition efforts to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL. I have also asked him to work closely with my national security team to strengthen our partnership with Iraq and work intensively with regional partners to bring an end to the civil war in Syria, which continues to fuel ISIL and other extremist groups.

NOTE: The statement referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

The President's Weekly Address
October 24, 2015

Hi, everybody. Our country is home to some of the most beautiful God-given landscapes in the world. We're blessed with natural treasures, from the Grand Tetons to the Grand Canyon, from lush forests and vast deserts to lakes and rivers teeming with wildlife. And it's our responsibility to protect these treasures for future generations, just as previous generations protected them for us.

Since taking office, I've set aside more than 260 million acres of public lands and waters, more than any President in history. Last month, we announced that 11 States had come together with ranchers and industry groups to protect a threatened species, the sage grouse, without jeopardizing local economies. Two weeks ago, we announced that we're creating one new marine sanctuary on the Potomac River in Maryland and another along Lake Michigan in Wisconsin, part of unprecedented efforts to restore the Chesapeake Bay and the Great Lakes. We also joined a coalition of countries cracking down on illegal fishing that threatens jobs and food security around the globe. And I'm going to keep protecting the places that make America special and the livelihoods of those who depend on them.

We'll also keep doing what we can to prevent the worst effects of climate change before it's too late. Over the past 6 years, we've led by example, generating more clean energy and lowering our carbon emissions. Our businesses have stepped up in a big way, including just this past week. Some of our biggest companies made new commitments to act on climate, not just because it's good for the planet, but because it's good for their bottom line.

This is how America is leading on the environment. And because America is leading by example, 150 countries, representing over 85 percent of global emissions, have now laid out plans to reduce their levels of the harmful carbon pollution that warms our planet. That gives us great momentum going into Paris this December, where the world needs to come together and build on these individual commitments with an ambitious, long-term agreement to protect this Earth for our kids.

Now Congress has to do its job. This month, even as Republicans in Congress barely managed to keep our Government open, they shut down something called the Land and Water Conservation Fund. For more than half a century, this fund has protected more than 5 million acres of land, from playgrounds to parks to priceless landscapes, all without costing taxpayers a dime. Nearly every single county in America has benefited from this program. It has bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate. Republicans in Congress should reauthorize and fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund without delay.

After all, as Pope Francis reminds us so eloquently, this planet is a gift from God, and our common home. We should leave it to our kids in better shape than we found it.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2:35 p.m. on October 23 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on October 24. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 23, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on October 24.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo of Indonesia

October 26, 2015

President Obama. Well, good afternoon, everybody. *Selamat siang*. [*Laughter*] It is a great pleasure to welcome President Widodo to the Oval Office, along with his delegation. And it is a useful occasion for us to emphasize the strength of the bilateral relationship between two of the world's largest democracies.

Obviously, I have a very personal interest in Indonesia given the fact that I spent time there as a child and I have relatives who are Indonesian. But what is also true is that our partnership is very much in the interests of the United States, given Indonesia's large population, its leadership in the region, its democratic traditions, the fact that it is a large Muslim country with a tradition of tolerance and moderation, and its role in trade and commerce and economic development. The United States has a great interest in being a partner with Indonesia, and I think our meeting today helped to emphasize the nature of what we believe is a key strategic partnership.

During the course of this meeting, I complimented the President on a number of the reforms that he's initiated, and we discussed how we could continue to strengthen the trade, investment, and commercial relationships between our two countries, including the President's interest in expanding the digital economy in Indonesia in a way that would alleviate poverty and empower millions of people in that country.

We had an opportunity to discuss our security cooperation, including in the maritime area, helping Indonesia modernize its naval capabilities. And we discussed the importance of working through channels like ASEAN and the East Asia Forum to encourage a continuing strengthening of rules and a international order governing the behavior of nations in the maritime area.

We talked about our cooperation in the counterterrorism area. Indonesia has been a very important partner. And we are continuing to work together not just on the security elements of counterterrorism, but also countering the message that comes from organizations like ISIL. And Indonesia, I think, is uniquely position to be able to help spread a message of peace and cooperation and modernity within the Muslim world.

And we discussed a range of global issues, because Indonesia, as a member of the G–20, is not only a regional leader, but also a global leader. So we discussed the joint work we're doing on issues like health—global health security and making sure that we have public health systems in place to prevent future pandemic.

Indonesia has been a leader on the open government forum and transparency and rooting out corruption. And one of the main topics we discussed was the issue of climate change and why it's so important that large countries like ours work together to arrive at the strongest possible set of targets and international agreements when we arrive in Paris just a little over a month from now.

So whether it's helping Indonesia deal with the current difficulties surrounding peat fires or it is encouraging ongoing student exchanges between our two countries, this meeting, I think, signifies our taking this partnership to the next level.

I think that, Mr. President, you are moving Indonesia in the right direction. We want to be a partner with you. And please know that the friendship that the United States feels towards

Indonesia is not just an issue of strategic interest, but also represents the strong people-to-people ties between Americans and Indonesians. And we want to welcome you and wish you well and look forward to our continued partnership.

President Widodo. First of all, I wish to thank President Obama for his warm welcome and the hospitality extended to myself and my delegation. I wish to also welcome the strategic partnership as a symbol of the enhancement of the bilateral cooperation between Indonesia and the United States.

Indonesia is the biggest Muslim country in the world. Indonesia is also the third largest democracy in the world. Islam in Indonesia is moderate, modern, and tolerant. We believe that Islam in Indonesia plays a significant role in maintaining democracy and pluralism, as well as fighting radicalism and terrorism.

Indonesia is an open economy, and with the 250 millions population, we are the largest economy in Southeast Asia. And Indonesia intends to join the TPP. Indonesia is also a country with enormous digital economy potential in the world. I have set a target to make digital economy as one of the top priorities in the future economic development of Indonesia. And in our discussion just now, I've also invited the United States to work together in this field.

We've had a thorough discussion with President Obama on the issue of climate change. We also agreed to work together in addressing this issue for the sake of our future generations. Especially in Indonesia, we have a big challenge right now. We have peat fires, and the efforts to extinguish it is quite challenging.

President Obama and I committed to strengthening and expanding the relationship between Indonesia and the United States.

Thank you.

President Obama. Terima kasih. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:55 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. President Widodo spoke in Bahasa Indonesia, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Joint Statement by President Obama and President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo of Indonesia

October 26, 2015

At the invitation of President Barack Obama of the United States of America, His Excellency Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia, visited the United States in October 2015. On this occasion, President Barack Obama and President Joko Widodo held a meeting at the White House on October 26, 2015, and adopted this Joint Statement.

The two Presidents recognized that the ties between their two countries are stronger than ever, dynamic, and firmly based on shared principles of democracy and good governance, respect for human rights, and the promotion of peace, stability, and economic well-being. The U.S.-Indonesia Comprehensive Partnership, a framework launched in 2010, has further broadened, deepened and elevated the bilateral relationship. The Comprehensive Partnership has demonstrated the global significance of enhanced cooperation between the world's second and third largest democracies, the tremendous possibilities for economic and development cooperation, and the importance of fostering exchanges and mutual understanding between two of the world's most diverse nations.

Strengthening a Long-Term Partnership

In order to meet evolving challenges and capitalize on emerging opportunities, the two Presidents recognized the need to enhance the U.S.-Indonesia Comprehensive Partnership and continue deepening the relationship based on mutual benefit and respect for each others'

sovereignty and territorial integrity. The United States and Indonesia, as two of the largest democratic countries in the world, share a responsibility and an abiding interest to address strategic challenges on the international stage, together as partners. In this spirit, the two Presidents committed to forge a Strategic Partnership between our countries, to expand cooperation on shared strategic interests. They further established an annual Ministerial Strategic Dialogue, led by the Secretary of State and the Foreign Minister and complemented by other minister-level exchanges, to discuss and collaborate on strategic efforts to advance international peace and prosperity as well as bilateral priorities. Recognizing the invaluable contributions of civil society and the private sector to the two democratic countries and their broader relationship, the two Presidents welcome civil society engagement and non-governmental tracks which will also be important to the vitality of their Strategic Partnership.

Maritime Cooperation

The two Presidents highlighted the importance of the maritime area to their respective countries, surrounding region, and the world. The two Presidents pledged to deepen their cooperation on maritime affairs, as described in the new "Memorandum of Understanding on Maritime Cooperation," which extends to a full range of fields, including: maritime security, maritime economy, marine resources and fisheries conservation and management, maritime safety and navigation, marine science and technology and other areas of cooperation identified by both countries.

Both Presidents underlined the importance of improving maritime infrastructure to enhance connectivity and enable freer flow of commerce in the region and between the two countries. Therefore, they committed to continue working together to promote cooperation and investment in infrastructure.

The two Presidents also affirmed the urgent needs to combat, prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing. They are committed to jointly identifying actions to strengthen bilateral cooperation and build capacity to combat IUU fishing.

Defense Cooperation

The two Presidents affirmed their commitment to further strengthen their bilateral defense cooperation, and welcomed the growth in bilateral military engagements, which now stand at more than 200 activities annually. The Presidents welcomed the Joint Statement on Comprehensive Defense Cooperation of October 26, 2015, between the Indonesian Ministry of Defense and the U.S. Department of Defense. The two Presidents underscored their commitment to deepen collaboration on areas such as: maritime cooperation, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, defense joint research and development, countering transnational threats, and military professionalization. The two Presidents also affirmed their interest in exploring and consulting on new activities to advance cooperation in the areas of co-development and co-production of defense equipment, cooperative logistics, and maritime security. As peacekeeping cooperation has been and remains an area of bilateral cooperation, the two Presidents welcomed the outcome of the Leaders' Summit on Peace Keeping on the margins of the 70th United Nations General Assembly. The United States welcomed Indonesia's role in peacekeeping efforts and its intention to expand its troop contribution.

Economic Growth and Development

The two Presidents recognized the importance of a predictable, open, and transparent economic policy framework, one that encourages foreign investment and promotes fair competition and the protection of intellectual property rights, to facilitate greater two-way trade and investment and to promote private sector-led economic growth. They acknowledged that such a policy framework is important for the growth of the financial sector, as foreign investors and service providers can provide capital and expertise to help deepen Indonesia's financial markets, as well as

channel private sector resources to help develop Indonesia's infrastructure. Both leaders discussed Indonesia's recent reforms and affirmed that steps to enhance the ease of doing business in Indonesia would create the conditions for a further expansion in two-way trade and investment. The two Presidents welcomed the recent commercial agreements between U.S.-based firms and Indonesian partners, amounting to over $20 billion, as reflective of the deepening bilateral economic relationship.

Regular consultations under the U.S.-Indonesia Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA), signed in 1996, serve as a key platform for both countries to address bilateral trade and investment issues, develop concrete initiatives to further deepen economic ties, and to increase cooperation in regional and multilateral fora. Both leaders welcomed the outcomes of the recent TIFA meeting, especially the agreement on working together to leverage future rounds of Indonesia's Economic Policy Package to advance deregulation. The United States and Indonesia remain committed to the ratification of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and to the implementation of the 2011 APEC Leaders' commitment to reduce applied tariffs on the agreed Environmental Goods List by the end of 2015.

Recognizing the opportunities and challenges presented by information and communications technology, both Presidents reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring that technology and innovation are critical components of overall bilateral engagement in the 21st century and in narrowing the digital divide. To this end, the Presidents committed to continue to develop cooperation in many areas of science, technology and innovation, including the development of the information and technology sector in Indonesia in alignment with Indonesia Digital Economy 2020 vision. The Presidents affirmed the need for states to protect the Internet as an essential platform for economic growth and development around the world. In support of that objective, both Presidents underscored the importance of further cooperation and discussions to ensure a safe and secure Internet, including efforts to promote trust, transparency, and stability among states regarding information and communication technologies.

The two Presidents also welcomed the recently launched bilateral Aviation Working Group aimed at assisting Indonesia improve the safety, security, and efficiency of its air transport network. Separately, the United States and Indonesia will continue consultations between the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Indonesia's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to support the DGCA's full implementation of international safety standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) with the aim of restoring Category I status at the earliest possible time.

Both countries note that their strong partnership to promote sustainable economic growth and reduce poverty through the $600 million Millennium Challenge Corporation compact, the largest compact in Asia, is advancing Indonesia's efforts to promote renewable energy and greenhouse gas emissions reduction, deliver essential public services, and improve overall health and nutrition for women and children.

Energy Cooperation

Recognizing their shared strategic interest in clean energy development and energy security, the United States and Indonesia affirmed their commitment to deepen energy-related cooperation as outlined under the new MoU Concerning Cooperation on Energy, which will support the establishment of Indonesia's Clean Energy Center of Excellence in Bali and deepen cooperation in areas such as accelerating the deployment of remote and off-grid renewable energy systems, collaborating on carbon capture and storage, and strengthening national energy security by planning strategic petroleum reserves. The two Presidents welcomed the newly created U.S.-Indonesia Power Working Group, which is aimed at helping Indonesia achieve its ambitious power generation goals over the next five years in a clean and sustainable way.

Increasing Cooperation on Global and Regional Issues

Both Presidents welcomed the Indonesian Government's maritime vision to become a global maritime fulcrum, as well as Indonesia's leadership in regional and global fora, and the United States' Rebalance policy to the Asia Pacific aimed at promoting peace, prosperity, stability and security in the Asia-Pacific Region.

Climate change remains a priority area of cooperation between the United States and Indonesia, and both countries committed to working closely together to implement strong domestic policies to limit greenhouse gas emissions and increase climate resilience. They also emphasized their commitment, at the Paris Climate Conference in December 2015, to conclude an ambitious and durable global climate agreement that reflects the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in light of different national circumstances, and that can help promote a global low-carbon transformation over the course of this century. Both Presidents affirmed their intention to phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption while maintaining essential energy services for the poor. The Presidents reiterated their support for the statement on hydroflourocarbons (HFCs) from the 2013 G–20 Leaders Statement.

The two Presidents affirmed the importance of preservation of peat lands and other high-carbon landscapes. President Obama welcomed President Widodo's recent policy actions to combat and prevent forest fires and associated health, environmental, and economic impacts, including President Widodo's May 2015 decision to extend the moratorium on new development licenses in primary forests and peatlands, and President Widodo expressed appreciation for the U.S. offer to assist in this regard. Both Presidents are committed to sustainable forest management, including through private-sector initiatives.

The two sides reaffirmed their G–20 commitment to lift growth, boost economic resilience and strengthen global institutions in efforts to achieve strong, sustainable, and balanced growth, by undertaking policies to support demand and create jobs that underpin prosperity. They also committed to promoting sustainable development, and the two Presidents welcomed the adoption of the post 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and committed to supporting it.

The two Presidents pledged to continue and strengthen their efforts to address non-traditional security threats, including the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism, natural disasters, illegal trafficking of wildlife, illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing and fisheries related crime, water security, and pandemics as well as cooperation and capacity building in cyber space.

President Obama acknowledged Indonesia's success in counterterrorism law enforcement actions, which serves as a model of a civilian-led, rule-of-law counterterrorism approach. The two Presidents pledged to continue and strengthen their cooperation and strong efforts to counter terrorists and other extremist groups, including stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, and counter-radicalization efforts to prevent virulent messages from taking hold in vulnerable populations. The United States and Indonesia welcomed the convention of the Leader's Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism. The two Presidents endorsed the Council on Religion and Pluralism, an innovative bilateral mechanism, designed to promote pluralism, tolerance, and moderation. To prevent an act of nuclear terrorism, both Presidents welcomed the planned 2016 Nuclear Security Summit and will complete cooperative efforts to secure nuclear materials in advance of the Summit.

The two Presidents also acknowledged the need for expanding cooperation on health and to build capacity to prevent, detect and respond to global health challenges, including epidemic threats. Taking into account the expanding cooperation in this area, the two countries have committed to work on an umbrella agreement on health cooperation that will provide framework and future direction. The United States welcomed Indonesia's continued

leadership in the five-year initiative of the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) aiming for mutually agreed upon targets, including as 2016 GHSA Steering Group Chair.

The United States and Indonesia are committed to enhancing cooperation in regional fora, such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum, and the East Asia Summit. Significantly, the two countries recognized the importance of a united and strong ASEAN, ASEAN's central role in the regional political and security architecture, and the strength of the United States–ASEAN relationship. Both leaders also noted the importance of strengthening and developing a positive and constructive regional architecture by supporting the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), and welcomed Indonesia's intentions to further strengthen the regional architecture of the Indian Ocean during its 2015–2017 IORA chairmanship.

The two Presidents expressed their shared concern about recent developments in the South China Sea that have increased tensions, eroded trust, and threatened to undermine peace, security, and the economic well-being of the region. Both countries believe it is vital for all parties to refrain from actions that raise tensions in the South China Sea. Both Presidents affirmed the importance of safeguarding maritime security and upholding internationally recognized freedoms of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea. Both countries support the peaceful resolution of disputes in conformity with international law, including as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 (UNCLOS), and recognize the importance of full and effective implementation of the Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China, as well as efforts to quickly conclude the Code of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea.

People to People Contacts

The United States and Indonesia, as two diverse democracies, are committed to fostering a robust civil society, vibrant press, and opportunities for women and minorities. Their joint leadership in the Open Government Partnership reflects their solid commitment to promoting good governance and transparency for the benefit of their citizens, and to sharing their experiences with emerging democracies through triangular cooperation.

The two Presidents are also committed to broadening and deepening the breadth of people to people ties between the two nations, including through promoting educational exchanges and tourism. President Obama welcomed Indonesia's policy to extend visa-free arrangements to U.S. citizens on short-term visits. The United States and Indonesia will consider ways to extend the validity of non-immigrant visas issued to Indonesians traveling to the United States for tourism and business as well as the validity of student and exchange visitor visas issued to U.S. citizens traveling to Indonesia.

The United States and Indonesia are committed to advancing bilateral cooperation in scientific research and higher education partnership through expanding opportunities for scientist-to-scientist collaborations in priority areas outlined by the Science & Technology Agreement including marine protection, agricultural technology, health and renewable energy. As a centerpiece of supporting this cooperation, the establishment of the Indonesian Science Fund represents a milestone in Indonesia's scientific development and the creation of new opportunities for connecting Indonesian research to the global scientific community.

Agreements and Arrangements Reached

The two Presidents welcomed the conclusion of the following agreements/arrangements:

- Memorandum of Understanding on Maritime Cooperation between the Government of The Republic of Indonesia and the Government of the United States of America
- Joint Statement on Comprehensive Defense Cooperation
- Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the Republic

of Indonesia and the Government of the United States of America Concerning Cooperation on Energy

- Memorandum of Understanding Between the Federal Aviation Administration Department of Transportation of the United States of America and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) of the Ministry of Transportation of the Republic of Indonesia on the Promotion of Sustainable Aviation Alternative Fuels and Renewable Energy.

NOTE: The joint statement referred to Minister of Foreign Affairs Retno Lestari Priansari Marsudi of Indonesia. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks Honoring the 2015 FIFA World Cup Champion United States Women's National Soccer Team

October 27, 2015

The President. Well, welcome to the White House, everybody. And, Ayla, thank you for that introduction. You did a great job. I know your dad is incredibly proud of you. I don't know where your brother is right now. [*Laughter*] But this is some payback right here. [*Laughter*] You just had a national audience just letting him know what's what. Because a lot of people agree with you, and nothing gives me more hope than knowing that we've got a whole generation of young women like Ayla ready to take the world by storm.

Speaking of women who took the world by storm, give it up for the world champion U.S. Women's National Soccer Team! Hey! I was really excited about this today. I go to a lot of meetings—[*laughter*]—and most of them aren't that interesting. And so to see this team that sparked the imagination of people all across the country and around the world is just wonderful.

I want to recognize a lot of people who made these incredibly talented women—put them in a position to be able to showcase their talent so effectively. First of all, U.S. Soccer President Sunil Gulati. Please give him a big round of applause. Great job, Sunil. Your outstanding coach, Jill Ellis. The—Coach Ellis, I very much appreciate you allowing them to come to the White House during your victory tour. They've been playing a lot of friendly matches across the country—although by the looks of the scores, they're not that friendly. [*Laughter*] These folks are kind of competitive.

Now, my first order of business is to congratulate our newlywed, Sydney Leroux. Sydney. Yay! Is that the——

Forward Abby Wambach. It's the Presidential wave.

The President. ——newlywed wave?

Ms. Wambach. It's the Presidential wave.

The President. Oh, it's the Presidential wave. Okay. So Syd got hitched a couple weeks ago, and just about the whole team showed up. I also hear that she's got a Chihuahua with 10,000 Twitter followers—[*laughter*]—which makes me thankful that Bo and Sunny don't have their own accounts, because I don't need them trolling me from my own house. [*Laughter*] But that's an aside.

It's been a busy few months for the team. Since winning the World Cup in July, they've graced the covers of magazines and video games and apparently even corn mazes. Now, this is a true story. A farmer in California built a corn maze in the shape of Megan Rapinoe's face. [*Laughter*]

Team member. Can't resist this.

The President. I mean, I thought I was cool a few years ago when somebody made a bust out of me out of butter. [*Laughter*] But Megan's got an entire cornfield.

But these champions deserve all the attention that they've been getting. After 16 long years, too many heartbreaks, they flew north to put America back on top of the soccer world. And they did it in style. It was a victory that took all 23 players. It took Christie Rampone's leadership, Alex

Morgan's playmaking, Heather O'Reilly's game face. [*Laughter*] It took Becky Sauerbrunn's quiet dominance and Abby Wambach's not-so-quiet—[*laughter*]—dominance. Abby said that she wanted her final World Cup to be like a fairytale. And I'm not sure she could have written a better ending: world champion at last, draped in the Stars and Stripes, showing us all how far we've come—on and off the field—by sharing a celebratory kiss with her wife.

And of course, this victory required Carli Lloyd. Now, Carli is no stranger to clutch performances; scored game-winning—game-winners in both the 2008 and 2012 Olympic Gold Medal matches. So this year's final against Japan, she did it even better, scoring three goals in the first 16 minutes. Now, I have to say, first of all, I was explaining to the team and Carli that—like, I had gotten my popcorn, I was all settling in. [*Laughter*] I'm thinking I've got a couple hours of tension and excitement, and poof, it was gone. [*Laughter*] It was over.

And afterward, Carli was asked if she ever thought that she would score three goals in a World Cup Final. No, she said, "I dreamed of scoring four." [*Laughter*] She does have an attitude. You can just see it. [*Laughter*] She's not lacking in confidence. Although I do think that rocket from midfield, that's a two-pointer. [*Laughter*] So it was almost like four.

And Carli's performance was so good that by the time the game was over, someone had changed her title on Wikipedia from "midfielder" to "President of the United States." [*Laughter*] Which, by the way, the job is about to open up. [*Laughter*]

Midfielder Carli Lloyd. I'm ready.

The President. What's another candidate in the mix? [*Laughter*]

I guarantee you Carli knows more about being President than some of the folks who are running. [*Laughter*] But that's a whole other topic of conversation.

Now, while Carli's performance put an exclamation point on a historic run, this victory was about more than just soccer. It was about dominance and skill and about inspiring our whole country. About a month before the World Cup kicked off, these players launched #SheBelieves initiative, encouraging young fans all across the country to believe in themselves.

And whether it was through the campaign—through that campaign or on the field, they've inspired millions of girls to dream bigger and, by the way, inspired millions of boys to look at girls differently, which is just as important.

Sasha had a chance to go with one of her best friends, Maisy, Joe's granddaughter, to the game, live. But others were following it all across the country. There were girls like the young player in Florida who told Sydney, "I look like you, and I want to be just like you." Girls like Ayla who too often heard that they weren't somehow supposed to be as good at sports as boys. And Ayla got mad, and she should be mad with those attitudes.

This team taught all America's children that "playing like a girl" means you're a badass. [*Laughter*] And—[*applause*]—perhaps I shouldn't have used that phrase, children. [*Laughter*] Playing like a girl means being the best. It means drawing the largest TV audience for a soccer match—men or women's—in American history. It means wearing our Nation's crest on your jersey, taking yourself and your country to the top of the world. That's what American women do. That's what American girls do. That's why we celebrate this team. They've done it with class. They've done it with the right way. They've done it with excitement. They've done it with style. We are very, very proud of them.

So, once again, on behalf of all Americans, congratulations. We couldn't be prouder of you. Let's go bring home the gold in Rio. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:27 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Pembroke, MA, resident Ayla Ludlow, her father Curt Ludlow, and her brother Nicholas Ludlow; Sydney Leroux and Alex Morgan, forwards, Megan Rapinoe and Heather O'Reilly, midfielders, and Christie Rampone and Becky Sauerbrunn, defenders, U.S. Women's National Soccer Team; Greg Hawes, co-owner, Historic Hawes Farms in Anderson, CA; Sarah Huffman, wife of Ms. Wambach; and Maisy Biden, granddaughter of Vice President Joe Biden.

Remarks at the International Association of Chiefs of Police Annual Conference in Chicago, Illinois

October 27, 2015

Well, good afternoon, everybody. Please have a seat. Welcome to Chicago, my hometown. Chief Beary, thank you for that introduction because it was brief, which—[*laughter*]—and that's what I like. At this point, one way or another, people know who I am.

And let me also thank our outstanding mayor of the city of Chicago, Rahm Emanuel, for hosting us. I know that thousands of you, from Federal, State, county, local, and tribal agencies have been working hard to share strategies and solutions to better serve and protect all of us. And we are profoundly grateful for your work. I do hope that you've gotten a little time to enjoy my hometown as well, because there is fun to be had here. Somebody clapped. [*Laughter*]

Now, even as we meet here today, though, another gathering of police is taking place in New York. Randolph Holder was born in Guyana to a family of police officers. His dad was a police officer. His grandfather was a police officer. And after his family came to America, Randolph followed in their footsteps and joined New York's finest. A week ago today, a shots-fired call came over the radio. And as Officer Holder chased down a suspect, he was shot and killed in the line of duty.

Officer Holder didn't run toward danger because he thought of himself as a hero, he ran toward danger because he was a cop. It was part of his job description, part of his calling. It's why so many of you wear the badge. Every day, you risk your lives so that the rest of us don't have to. You serve and protect to provide the security so many Americans take for granted. And by the way, your families serve alongside you. And as you serve, America places very high expectations on you, expectations that cops across America work every day to meet.

So I want to start by saying, on behalf of the American people, thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

This country is safer because of your efforts. Look at the statistics. Over the last 20 years, police have helped cut the violent crime rate and the homicide rate in America by almost half. It's an astonishing statistic. Today, Americans are nearly half as likely to be the victim of an aggravated assault and less than half as likely to be the victim of a robbery. And even lesser known are the countless acts of kindness and support, helpfulness that your officers perform in your respective communities each and every day.

So I want to be as clear as I can be. I reject any narrative that seeks to divide police and communities that they serve. I reject a storyline that says, when it comes to public safety, there's an "us" and a "them," a narrative that too often gets served up to us by news stations seeking ratings or tweets seeking retweets or political candidates seeking some attention. I know that's shocking that political candidates do that. Because your work and your service really has helped to make America safer than it's been in decades, and that's something for which every American should be proud.

Now, that doesn't mean that things are perfect. It doesn't mean that we shouldn't have a serious and robust debate over fairness in law enforcement, over our broader criminal justice system when it comes particularly to communities of color. I was just talking to Chief Beary before I came out. And I know that there was an outstanding discussion with the NAACP. I've talked to enough chiefs and beat cops around the country to know you care about these issues; you want to do the right thing. And I know there are a few people—there are few people that are more invested in declining crime rates than minority communities that so often have historically been underpoliced. They want more police presence in many of these communities, not less.

And that's why I'm confident that in this debate, people of good will can and should find common ground. And many of you have shown that there are actions—specific actions—we

can take that will make a difference in moving us in that direction.

Now, first, we do need to get some facts established. So far, the data shows that overall violent crime rates across the Nation appear to be nearly as low as they were last year and significantly lower than they were in previous decades. It is true that in some cities, including here in my hometown of Chicago, gun violence and homicides have spiked, and in some cases, they've spiked significantly. But the fact is, is that so far at least, across the Nation, the data shows that we are still enjoying historically low rates of violent crime.

Moreover, over the past few years, the number of police officers shot and killed in the line of duty has fallen to their lowest levels in decades. In fact, 2013 saw the fewest cops shot and killed in the line of duty since 1887.

Of course, each victim of crime is one too many. Each fallen police officer is one too many. I've spoken to too many families of the fallen—including right before I came out here—to not fully appreciate the pain and the hardship, the fear that so many families go through because police officers are putting themselves in the line of fire.

Moreover, because the spike in violent crime in a number of predominantly urban, minority communities is real and deeply troubling—and I want to make it very clear, this is not something that I just think of as being academic. I live on the South Side of Chicago, so my house is pretty close to some places where shootings take place. Because that's real, we've got to get on top of it before it becomes an accelerating trend. And that's why I've asked my outstanding Attorney General, Loretta Lynch, a former prosecutor, to work aggressively with law enforcement and prosecutors and leaders in these communities to find out exactly why is this happening and then target resources where they will have an impact.

So for the remainder of the time that I am in this office and then as a private citizen, I will do everything that I can to encourage cooperation and work hard to make sure that the work that's being done by law enforcement is appreciated and supported and that we maintain this incredible progress that we've made in terms of reducing crime. But in order for us to do that, we do have to stick with the facts. We—what we can't do is cherry-pick data or use anecdotal evidence to drive policy or to feed political agendas. If we stick with the facts and we maintain effective coordination across Federal, State, and local agencies, then we're going to continue the hard-fought progress that you and so many law enforcement officers have made over the past two decades that saves lives and keeps families intact.

Now, it's to maintain this progress that I've spent a lot of time this year with people of all backgrounds working to reform our criminal justice system, to think about how can we make it work better. I visited a prison in Oklahoma, met with inmates and corrections officers. I just, last week, visited a community in West Virginia and met with recovering substance abusers and those working on new solutions for treatment and rehabilitation. I've met with rank-and-file officers in the Oval Office, met with police chiefs in the White House, met with chiefs and rank-and-file officers in Camden, New Jersey, paid tribute to those who have fallen in the line of duty, and listened to families talk about what they're looking for in terms of support.

And as I said in my State of the Union Address this year, I am convinced that progress comes together when we work together, and we work together best when we're willing to understand one another: when, instead of having debates over talk radio, we stop and listen to each other so that we can empathize with the father who fears his son can't walk home without being mistaken for a criminal; and when we sympathize with the wife who can't rest until her husband walks through the front door at the end of his shift.

Those of us in positions of power have an obligation to give you what you need to do your jobs even better and to facilitate the conversations and reforms required to move us all forward. So today I'd like to focus on three things. Obviously, I don't have time to touch on every aspect of these issues. I'm sure you've already heard a lot of speeches today and yesterday.

But I want to focus on three things that I think are really important.

First, making sure you've got the resources you need to get the job done. Second, criminal justice reforms that will make the system smarter and fairer. And third, reducing the risks your officers face in the field with commonsense gun safety reforms.

We need to start by supporting you, the men and women who walk that thin blue line. Over the past 6½ years, my administration has invested more than $2 billion to retain or hire 10,000 police officers. When State and city budgets were paralyzed during the economic crisis, we stepped in to save the jobs of thousands of cops. Right now we're helping make sure departments throughout the country have the equipment they need, like bulletproof vests and the training to use that equipment. We've opened up data so that police departments can use new technology to spot patterns and stop crimes. And we're setting aside radio spectrum for first responders so that, for the first time in history, America's police departments will share a single network. We're creating a nationwide blue alert system and launching anti-ambush training programs to help keep officers safe.

Vice President Joe Biden, a lifelong friend of law enforcement, has an expression he likes to offer; he's got an expression for everything. [*Laughter*] "Show me your budget, and I'll tell you what you value." Well, I tell you what, in my budget proposal, I've asked Congress to increase funding for the COPS programs so that we can hire even more police officers and make sure you have the training and equipment you need. That's what I value. It's in my budget.

And I'll be honest with you. In the past, some Republicans in Congress have tried to cut funding for the COPS program to zero. And I've argued that's wrong. It won't make us safer. It's time more folks in Washington started valuing our cops, not just giving lip service to it.

Now, the good news is, the COPS program and other programs that your departments rely on to do your jobs may get some relief from the harmful spending cuts that Congress imposed a couple of years ago, because last night Democrats and Republicans in Congress came together around a long-term budget agreement. I'm pretty happy about that because it reflects our values, growing the economy and the middle class by investing in the things like education and job training that are needed, and it keeps us safe by investing in our national security. It's paid for responsibly, in part with a measure to make sure hedge funds and private equity firms pay what they owe in taxes just like everybody else. It's the right thing to do.

And it's an actual bipartisan compromise, which hasn't been happening in Washington a lot lately, locks in 2 years of funding for budgets that finally free us from the cycle of shutdown threats and last-minute patchwork fixes. It allows us to plan for the future, and as a consequence will allow your departments to plan for the future. So that's good news for everybody. It's a step forward.

And I hope both parties come together to pass this agreement without delay. They've got a few days to do it. And then, I hope Congress gets right to work on spending bills to invest in America's priorities and that they don't get sidetracked by ideological provisions that have no place in America's budget process.

Now, I believe valuing law enforcement starts with making sure that it provides you the resources you need. But I also think it means more than just funding our priorities. Money helps. More police officers help. But we've got to do more. So the second thing I want to focus on is fundamentally reforming our criminal justice system to make it smarter and fairer and easier for your officers to do their jobs safely and effectively.

Now, this is not an easy conversation to have. First of all, we all care about keeping crime rates low. And things have been working, and so a lot of folks say, "What's the problem?" But for generations, we've had African American and Latino communities who have pointed to racial disparities in the application of criminal justice, from arresting—arrest rates to sentencing to incarceration rates. And all too often these concerns, no matter how well

documented, have bene brushed aside. And we can't have a situation in which a big chunk of the population feels like maybe the system isn't working as well for them.

At the same time, too often, law enforcement gets scapegoated for the broader failures of our society and our criminal justice system. And I know you do your jobs with distinction no matter the challenges you face. That's part of wearing a badge. But we can't expect you to contain and control problems that the rest of us aren't willing to face or do anything about: problems ranging from substandard education to a shortage of jobs and opportunity, an absence of drug treatment programs, and laws that result in it being easier in too many neighborhoods for a young person to purchase a gun than a book.

So, if we're serious about protecting our communities and supporting our police departments, then let's invest in more opportunity, and let's try to stop more crime before it starts. Let's go after the racial disparities at the root.

One study found that every dollar we invest in pre-K—in universal pre-K, early childhood education—we save at least twice that down the road in reduced crime. Getting a teenager a job for the summer may cost some money, but it costs a fraction of what it will cost to lock him up for 15 years. It's not enough to tell our young people that crime doesn't pay if they have no prospects at all. We've got to make sure they grow up knowing that hard work and responsibility pay off and that they've got other paths available to them.

For those who do break the law, we do have to take a hard look at whether in all circumstances punishment fits the crime. Now, I want to be clear about this. Right now America is home to less than 5 percent of the world's population, but about 25 percent of its prisoners. Now, plenty of them belong there. I don't have sympathy for dangerous, violent offenders. I don't have sympathy for folks who are preying on children. I've got two daughters; I care about making sure these streets are safe. So this is not some bleeding-heart attitude here. Violence is real in this city and around the country. And I've seen firsthand the devastation the drug trade has wrought on individual lives and entire communities, and I believe that those who peddle drugs need to be punished. I don't think decriminalization is some panacea.

But down in West Virginia, you'd hear stories of families where—these are good folks whose children were getting caught up in drugs and young people suddenly overdosing three, four times and getting caught up in the criminal justice themselves because they were hooked.

But it's also important for us to acknowledge that our prisons are crowded with not only hardcore violent offenders, but also some nonviolent offenders serving very long sentences for drug crimes at taxpayer expense. And it's important to acknowledge that having millions of Black and Latino men in the criminal justice system, without any ability for most of them to find a job after release—and most of them will eventually be released—that's not a sustainable situation.

It is possible for us to come up with strategies that effectively reduce the damage of the drug trade without relying solely on incarceration. And the reason I say that is because we've seen States and local police departments and law enforcement do it. States from Texas to South Carolina to California and Connecticut have already reduced their prison populations over the last 5 years and seen their crime rates fall.

So let's take some of the $80 billion we spend each year to keep people locked up—not all of it, because like I said, some of those folks, you want behind bars—but let's look at the system and see where are areas where we can use some of that money to help law enforcement go after drug kingpins and violent gangs and terrorists. And if we can get some with a drug addiction or mental health issue into treatment, that may save us some money that allows us to put a murderer in that jail cell instead.

When we do that, we're not just making it more likely that a nonviolent offender can be reintegrated into society, we're making the en-

tire community safer. If rehabilitation programs help a prisoner become a skilled worker instead of a hardened criminal, you are less likely to have to arrest that person again and again and again and again. And I can't thank the chiefs enough here because a lot of you are out front on this issue, and you've talked about it. I know because I've met with you on it.

Now, in a hopeful sign, good people in both political parties are actually ready to do something about this. Just last week, the Senate—which basically gets very little done, as you may have noticed—[*laughter*]—the Senate voted to move forward on a bipartisan criminal justice reform bill. And that bill would cut back on mandatory minimums for nonviolent drug offenders. It would give prisoners time off their sentences if they complete programs that make them less likely to commit a repeat offense. It would invest some of those savings in law enforcement so you've got more resources that you need. And there's a similar bill in the House of Representatives. So this is not something I get to say very often: I am encouraged by what Congress is doing. [*Laughter*] I hope they get a bill to my desk so that I can sign it and together we can work to keep reducing America's crime rate and its incarceration rate at the same time.

Now, even if we pass bipartisan reform, we are still going to have communities that experience a disproportionate amount of crime. In every big city in America and some small ones, folks know where are the neighborhoods where crimes are taking place disproportionately. And in some of those communities, we've still got work to do to restore trust between law enforcement and the citizens they protect and serve. This is also a hard conversation, but I hope you don't mind, I'm going to go ahead and have it. This one of the benefits of not having to run for office again. [*Laughter*]

I'm sure if you polled this room, people would have different takes on what happened in places like Ferguson and New York. And let's face it, the media tends to focus on the sensational and the controversial and folks on both sides who say stuff that's not designed to bring people together, but oftentimes, makes the situation more polarized. And as a society, we tend to lurch from shock to complacency on these issues. And I'm suggesting we have to resist that impulse. With today's technology, if just one of your officers does something irresponsible, the whole world knows about it moments later. And the countless incidents of effective police work rarely make it on the evening news. So—[*applause*].

So it's important for us not to just pounce and jump on anything that happens and immediately just draw conclusions. We've got to resist the false trap that says either there should be no accountability for police or that every police officer is suspect no matter what they do. Neither of those things can be right. It's on all of us to let investigations uncover facts; to make sure that stories of misconduct aren't spread before we know the facts and that they're not the only stories that we share. Because, as I said before, every day your officers aren't just stopping crimes, they're responding to emergencies and protecting victims of domestic violence and volunteering to coach Little League and refereeing pickup games. Those stories need to go viral as well.

But you know as well as I do that the tensions in some communities, the feeling that law enforcement isn't always applied fairly, those sentiments don't just come out of nowhere. I mean, there is a long history here in this country. It's not something that any individual person here is responsible for, but we all have a responsibility to do something about it because it's part of our legacy.

I was at an event last week with L.A.'s Police Chief, Charlie Beck, and we were asked a question about this issue, of tensions and the feeling in minority communities that sometimes law enforcement isn't applied fairly. And I repeated what I've said before, which is that there were times when I was younger and maybe even as I got a little older, but before I had a motorcade—[*laughter*]—where I got pulled over. And I confessed—I told Chief Beck—most of the time I got a ticket, I deserved it. I knew why I was pulled over. But there were times where I didn't.

And as a report that came out just this week reminded us, there are a lot of African Americans—not just me—who have that same kind of story of being pulled over or frisked or something. And the data shows that this is not an aberration. It doesn't mean each case is a problem. It means that when you aggregate all the cases and you look at it, you've got to say that there's some racial bias in the system.

Now, problems of racial justice or injustice have been running themes throughout this country's history in every institution—in every institution. And by the way, bias and stereotypes oftentimes go both ways. So eliminating bias is not something that falls on the police alone.

The good news is, our divides are not as deep as some would suggest. I will tell you I don't know anybody in the minority community that does not want strong, effective law enforcement. I don't know anybody who doesn't want their kids to be safe when they're walking to school or playing in a playground. Everybody should understand that police officers do a dangerous job. Nobody wants to see police officers hurt.

The question then is how do we bridge these issues: concern about fairness and a concern about effectiveness in making sure that police officers get the support they need. That's why I set up a Task Force on 21st-Century Policing last year that came up with detailed recommendations that departments and officers can implement to keep building trust. And I appreciate all the members of the IACP who joined fellow officers and community activists and young people as part of that Task Force. I would urge all the chiefs here and all of you who are interested in this to look at the Task Force recommendations, because it was really interesting. You had people who were protesters at Ferguson sitting with police officers and police chiefs, and they came up with some shared recommendations.

It talked about having open data and independent investigations to make sure the system isn't—was fair. It talked about helping law enforcement work with schools and businesses and youth groups so that kids who want to make a difference in their communities say, "When I grow up, I want to be a cop."

Right here in Chicago, Mayor Emanuel and the Chicago PD have spent the past few years working to build on this philosophy, forming new partnerships with ministers, putting more officers on bikes and on foot so they can talk with residents. Earlier this year I went to Camden, New Jersey, where they used to have complete mistrust between the department and local residents and where the crime rate was sky high. And they're now using community policing and data to drive down crime. They've got a war room with cameras trained on hotspots around the city. And they've got software that lets community residents direct those cameras on where drug dealers or gangs are congregating. And that way, local residents feel that they're not just being spied on, they're partners with the police.

The police chief there trained their officers from the very first day—the officers would just be dropped off in the neighborhoods they were going to be serving—and said, you're spending all day here without a car, figure it out, which meant that if they'd even just wanted to go to the restroom, they'd have to get to know the local business. And they started meeting parents and communities. And that way they were—because they knew the communities they were serving, they were able to distinguish between the drug dealer and the good kid, even if both of them were wearing a hoodie.

The police even bought two ice cream trucks with drug forfeiture money and, in the summer, drove them into some neighborhoods where gangs had taken over and drug dealers were peddling on the streets, and otherwise, the street was empty. They drove those ice cream trucks, planted them there, and had police officers giving out free ice cream. And suddenly, the community started coming out, and the drug dealers started fading away. All of a sudden, the street corners where criminals were dealing drugs had police officers dishing out free chocolate chip. [*Laughter*]

But in all of these efforts, the goal was to get the community involved before a crime takes place, to build trust before a crisis erupts. And

officers then feel more welcome to their communities, citizens are more likely to cooperate with the police. And that makes us all safer.

Now, look, I'm not naive. I'm not suggesting that any of this is easy. A lot of times, it means more resources for police departments because it's more labor intensive. If you want that kind of community policing, then you got to have enough police to be able to do that, because it takes time to do more than just respond to a call.

And I don't want to suggest that we're ever going to eliminate all misunderstandings or stereotypes between police officers and minority communities. It's certainly not going to happen overnight. And it's especially tough because there's more crime in these communities, which means that the police are interacting with them more than they are in some fancy neighborhoods.

Good community policing has to be a two-way street. The communities that desperately need effective policing have to give police officers the benefit of the doubt and have to work with the police department to make sure you've got the resources and support to effectively implement strategies that we know work.

And the flipside of it is, when an individual officer does display bias or excessive force, which is going to happen—just like there are going to be politicians who do stupid things or business leaders do something; there is no profession that doesn't have somebody who sometimes screws up—then we've got to have departments to honestly and fairly address it and not just simply close ranks or stand down.

So none of this is easy, but it can be done. And it has to be done. Because I refuse to believe that the only choice we have is to either ignore circumstances of racial bias or make it impossible for police officers to do their job. That can't be the choice that we've got. We've got to reject that false choice.

Third point, to make our communities safer and to make our officers safer, we've got to make it harder for criminals to cause chaos by getting their hands on deadly firearms.

Police officers see the toll that gun violence takes on our communities, not just when there's a mass shooting, but every single day. If you go to the South Side of Chicago or the West Side of Chicago and you walk around neighborhoods that now have big problems with violent crime and homicide and you talk to the folks who have lived there for a long time and they ask you what's changed, some of it they'll talk about in terms of, well, there used to be more jobs here; people could go over to the factory even if they didn't have a great education, could make a decent living; households were more intact. But a lot of what they'll say is, you know, it used to be if a kid or a group of kids was misbehaving, adults could say something to them. And now folks don't because you don't know if they're armed. [*Applause*] You don't know if they're armed.

So police officers don't have the luxury of seeing this issue in black and white terms. You know exactly why someone all too often should want to own a gun. It's a powerful instrument. It helps you do a dangerous job. It's something that has to be used with care. Many of you, like millions of law-abiding Americans, are sportsmen or hunters, or you've got a firearm in your home for protection. But you also know the fact is that it's too easy for criminals to buy guns, and that makes your already dangerous job far more dangerous than it should be.

And it makes the communities so fearful that it's harder for them to be a good partner with you, because the streets become abandoned and parents start not being as involved in monitoring what's taking place. You have a risk of being shot. It's risky enough responding to a domestic violence call or a burglary in progress without having to wonder if the suspect is armed to the teeth, maybe has better weapons than you do. And the fact is that in States with high gun ownership, police officers are three times more likely to be murdered than in States with low gun ownership. That is a fact. So you know that more guns on the streets do not make you or your communities safer.

Now, one of the benefits of being President is, you travel all around the country, and I do know that there is a difference in what firearms mean and how they are handled in rural

communities and in urban settings. And we've got to take into account some of the regional differences that are involved. But I do want to emphasize this is not just an issue for cities.

There are those who criticize any gun safety reforms by pointing to my hometown as an example. They say, well, look, Chicago had a spike in homicides this year, they've got gun safety laws, so this must be proof that tougher gun safety laws don't help, maybe make things worse. The problem with that argument, as the Chicago Police Department will tell you, is that 60 percent of guns recovered in crimes come from out of State. You've just got to hop across the border. As I said before, it is easier for a lot of young people in this city and in some of your communities to buy a gun than buy a book. It is easier in some communities to find a gun than it is to find some fresh vegetables at a supermarket. That's just a fact.

And that's why the IACP and the overwhelming majority of the American people—Democrat and Republican—believe we should require national criminal background checks for anybody who wants to purchase a gun. That's why the IACP believes we shouldn't sell military-style assault weapons to civilians. They don't need them. They don't need them to hunt a deer. Here—it's just a simple proposition: Cops should not be outarmed by the criminals that they're pursuing.

As I said, earlier this afternoon I met with families of police officers who gave their lives in the line of duty. And I met with families of children here in Chicago who were taken from us by gun violence. And I do this too often, meeting with grieving families. I'm proud to be able to express to them that the entire country cares about them and that they're in our thoughts and prayers and that we're sorry for their loss. But I have to tell you—and I know some of you have heard my frustration in the past here—when I meet with these families, I can't honestly tell them that our country has done everything we could to keep this from happening again: from seeing another officer shot down, from seeing another innocent bystander suffer from a gunshot wound. And that's a travesty.

Thirty-two cops have been shot and killed this year. At least a dozen children have been shot and killed this month. About 400,000 Americans have been shot and killed by guns since 9/11—400,000. Just to give you a sense of perspective, since 9/11, fewer than 100 Americans have been murdered by terrorists on American soil; 400,000 have been killed by gun violence. That's like losing the entire population of Cleveland or Minneapolis over the past 14 years.

And I refuse to accept the notion that we couldn't have prevented some of those murders, some of those suicides, kept more families whole, protected more officers if we had passed some commonsense laws.

So look, I understand we won't all agree on this issue. But it's time to be honest: Fewer gun safety laws don't mean more freedom, they mean more danger. Certainly, more danger to police, more fallen officers, more grieving families, more Americans terrified that they or their loved ones could be next. So I'm going to keep calling on the folks in Congress to change the way that they think about gun safety. And if they don't, I'm going to keep on calling on Americans to change the folks in Congress until they get it right.

And please do not—if some of you watching certain television stations or listening to certain radio programs, please do not believe this notion that somehow I'm out to take everybody's guns away. Every time a mass shooting happens, one of the saddest ironies is that suddenly, the purchase of firearms and ammunition jumps up because folks are scared into thinking that Obama is going to use this as an excuse to take away our Second Amendment rights. Nobody is doing that. We're talking about commonsense measures to make sure criminals don't get them; to make sure background checks work; to make sure that—to make sure that we're protecting ourselves.

So supporting law enforcement and having a budget that backs it up, not just—because talk is cheap, but actually following through to make sure you've got the resources you need: reforming our criminal justice system so it is smarter and we can reduce crime while still re-

ducing the incarceration rate; restoring trust between communities; refusing to give up on gun safety. We can take those steps. That's within our reach.

We can't stop every crime. We can't prevent every tragedy. There is evil in the world. There are just some bad people. You don't know why sometimes, they just—it just happens. You can't always make excuses for it; sometimes, you can't even understand it. That's why we need laws. That's why we need law enforcement. That's why your job is dangerous. So we can't eliminate all of that. But if we take some of the actions I just talked about, then we will be able to help you do what you do every day, which is save people's lives. We'll be able to make sure that the society is a partner with law enforcement, that we're not just sending you out there to do dirty work and then hanging you up to dry if it doesn't work out well, but that instead, we're all working together tackling these hard problems.

Because, after all, the goal that we share is not just a country with falling crime rates or a country where most of us are safe and all the crime is just in a few neighborhoods that we can avoid. Our goal is a country with rising opportunity and rising hopes and chances for everybody who is willing to make the effort. And I know that police officers so often see America at its worst. That's an unfortunate part of the job. But I want you to know that in you we often see America at its best. You don't just protect us from each other, you build a foundation so that we can trust each other and rely on each other. And that's what America's about: the idea that we're all in this together. That's the ideal. We don't always achieve it. I understand there's partisanship; there's racial division, and we've got a long history of stuff, and politicians oftentimes make it worse instead of making it better. But at our best, we're in this together.

In closing, you may have seen one of the videos of encounters with law enforcement that went viral last year. It was recorded in Tarrant, Alabama. You had a young officer named William Stacy who was called to apprehend a shoplifter at a Dollar General. Officer Stacy was White; the woman who admitted to stealing was Black. She stole three eggs, she said, because her grandchildren hadn't eaten in days. Officer Stacy ordered her to wait in the parking lot, and he went into the store. And the woman was sure she was going to jail. And then, Officer Stacy came out with a dozen eggs that he bought for her and her family.

And that's not just a testament to Officer Stacy, because when the video of the encounter went viral, folks across the country began calling the Tarrant Police Department, asking how they could help too. And the woman later said she had been blessed with "manna from heaven," all because of one officer's kindness. "He pushed my world in the right direction," the woman said, "and I will never forget it."

That's America at its best. That's some good police work. That's what so many of you represent. I thank you for the work you do. I thank you for your fellow officers. Let's keep pushing our world in the right direction towards fairness and justice and safety.

May God protect our cops. May God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:18 p.m. at McCormick Place West. In his remarks, he referred to Richard Beary, president, International Association of Chiefs of Police, who introduced the President; Randolph Holder, Jr., a New York City police officer who was killed in pursuit of a robbery suspect on October 20, and his father Randolph Holder, Sr.; Tyrone Howard, who was charged with robbery and murder in the death of Officer Holder; Charles L. Beck, chief, Los Angeles Police Department; J. Scott Thompson, chief, Camden County Police Department; and Tarrant, AL, resident Helen Johnson. He also referred to H.R. 1314.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Chicago
October 27, 2015

Well, first of all, to Robbie and D'Rita, thank you so much for helping to pull this together. Two weeks isn't a lot of time, so I apologize in advance for putting you on the spot like that. [*Laughter*]

Austen, you are official now. [*Laughter*] I am conferring on you officialdom. [*Laughter*] And, Ava, you are the big sister of official. [*Laughter*] So we are proud of you both. And we're so grateful to the whole Robinson family.

And I want to just thank everybody here. Look, it is always good coming home. It's always good being home. And looking around the room—and I say this every time I come home, but it's true because it's true—[*laughter*]—my entire career has been impacted by people in this room. I've got folks who were friends of mine when I ran for my first State senate race in this room. I have people who went with me or were in classes in the little tot music thing with Malia when she had two buns—[*laughter*]. And I've got people here who have been friends to me and Michelle for years and to help guide our Presidential campaign. So whenever I see all of you, it just brings back great memories, and it reminds me of the values that we've tried to carry into the White House and have tried to promote all these years.

I'm going to be very brief because the nice thing about an intimate group like this is, I can take time to take questions from you. I'll just say this. After 7 years of hard work, I think we can look back and say that the country is better because of what we've done together.

We pulled the United States and the world out of an economic crisis, stabilized the financial system, have grown jobs for over 5 years, more than 13 million jobs created; 17 million people without health insurance before now have it. We've seen a doubling of clean energy. We have seen an explosion in production of energy of all sorts; reduced our imports of foreign oil by more than half. We're finally tackling climate change in a serious way and reestablishing ourselves as a world leader on the environmental stage.

High school graduations up; college enrollment up; millions of young people able to go to college that couldn't go before because of the work that we've done. We've changed how people think about each other and helped usher in marriage equality and the ending of "don't ask, don't tell." Attention to criminal justice issues in ways that can keep our streets safe and ensure fairness in the application of the law.

There are very few measures by which the country is not better off than when we came in. Now, I say "we" deliberately because I always remind folks, in Grant Park and prior to Grant Park, I always said, "Yes, we can." I didn't say, "Yes, I can." And this has been a collaborative effort with the American people. And I get a chance—I have the privilege of meeting them everywhere, in all walks of life. And I will tell you that I am more optimistic now, 7 years after Grant Park, than I was on that night. I believe more deeply in the decency and hard work and persistence and generosity of the American people.

And as frustrating as Washington can be—and I promise you, it can be frustrating—[*laughter*]—the system has a way of, over time, just jiggering and going down blind allies and hitting bumps, but if we are determined to change it, it changes. About a year and a half ago, people we're saying I was a lame duck. We've been flapping our wings a lot over that year and a half. [*Laughter*] But the reason is, is because if we're able to continually build coalitions and change minds and make arguments, you don't always win the first time but eventually you do win.

Now, we've still got some big challenges ahead. There remains a troubling trend of growing inequality in our society that has to be attended to, and it's not just a matter of tinkering at the edges. We've got to invest in education in ways that we have not. We're going to have to make sure that we're investing in re-

search and development and stay on the cutting-edge of technological change in ways that we have not. We've got to rebuild our infrastructure. We have to make sure that our immigration system reflects our traditions as a nation of laws, but also a nation of immigrants, and that welcomes in the best and the brightest from all around the world.

We've got more work to do to build on the success of Obamacare so that we are continually improving quality and reducing costs and expanding access. We've got to make sure that what we've started on climate change we finish. And internationally, there are still tragedies and crises and war where our leadership is vital.

And that's why I'm here tonight. As you may have noticed, I will not be on the ballot the next election. And this is due to our Constitution and the wisdom of George Washington's example, and it is due to Michelle Obama—[*laughter*]—and her wisdom. So the reason I'm here is not for "I," it is for "we," because just as this started as a collaborative project between me and so many citizens in this city and then in this State and, ultimately, around the country, when I step down from this office I'm still a citizen, I'm still part of "we," and I am very invested in making sure that we continue on the path of progress that we've made.

And that's why you're here. You've always been a part of this team. And it doesn't stop once my particular time in office is done. Our job continues in making sure that my successor is building on the progress that we've made, and that we have a Congress that reflects the values that we care about. And I'm confident we can do it. But it's going to be because we did it together.

And for your presence here tonight, I couldn't be more grateful. Thanks, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:37 p.m. at the PUBLIC Chicago hotel. In his remarks, he referred to E.O. "Robbie" Robinson, Jr., managing director, BDT Capital Partners, LLC, his wife D'Rita Robinson, founder and chief executive officer, Chatty Guest, and their children Austen and Ava. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, of the United Kingdom

October 28, 2015

President Obama. Well, it is a great pleasure to welcome His Royal Highness Prince Harry here to the Oval Office. I've had an opportunity to spend a lot of time with so many of his family members, but this is the first time that we had a chance to talk directly.

He has gotten to know Michelle very well, for a range of reasons, but in particular, he's here to talk about the Invictus Games, an initiative that is bringing together wounded warriors from around the world, under the leadership of Prince Harry and others, to make sure that we see not simply the sacrifices they've made, but also the incredible contributions, strength, and courage they continue to display.

And so we are very glad to support the Invictus Games. It's going to be coming here to the United States, to Orlando, in March [May]* of next year. Michelle and myself are interested in promoting it.

We want to thank His Royal Highness for his own service in Afghanistan alongside our outstanding American troops. It is a testament to the special relationship, the incredible bond that we share between our two countries. And that bond continues into the next generation of leadership that His Royal Highness represents.

So we're very grateful for him not only for this specific work, but also for continuing to strengthen the deep, deep bonds between our two countries.

* White House correction.

Prince Harry. Mr. President, thank you very, very much both for hosting us today and especially in giving the Invictus Games the voice that it so readily deserves, I suppose.

And we had huge amounts of fun designing the Invictus Games based around stealing the Warrior Games off yourselves and making it international, making it better, and now we're giving it back to you. So we're really looking forward to the 8th—between 8th and 12th of May and hoping to see as many people as possible come down and support all our wounded warriors together.

So thank you very much.

President Obama. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:14 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Sudan
October 28, 2015

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to Sudan is to continue in effect beyond November 3, 2015.

The crisis constituted by the actions and policies of the Government of Sudan that led to the declaration of a national emergency in Executive Order 13067 of November 3, 1997, and the expansion of that emergency in Executive Order 13400 of April 26, 2006, and with respect to which additional steps were taken in Executive Order 13412 of October 13, 2006, has not been resolved. These actions and policies continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13067 with respect to Sudan.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
October 28, 2015.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on Congressional Passage of Federal Budget Legislation
October 30, 2015

I applaud the Democrats and Republicans who came together this morning to pass a responsible, long-term budget agreement that reflects our values, grows our economy, and creates jobs. This agreement will strengthen the middle class by investing in education, job training, and basic research. It will keep us safe by investing in our national security. It protects our seniors by avoiding harmful cuts to Medicare and Social Security. It is paid for in a responsible, balanced way, in part with a measure to ensure that partnerships like hedge funds pay what they owe in taxes just like everybody else. It locks in 2 years of funding and should help break the cycle of shutdowns and manufactured crises that have harmed our economy.

This agreement is a reminder that Washington can still choose to help, rather than hinder, America's progress, and I look forward to signing it into law as soon as it reaches my desk. After that, Congress should build on

this by getting to work on spending bills that invest in America's priorities without getting sidetracked by ideological provisions that have no place in America's budget process. If we can do that, we'll help our workers and businesses keep growing the economy and building an America full of opportunity for all.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 1314.

Message to the Congress on Terminating the Designation of Burundi as a Beneficiary Sub-Saharan African Country Under the African Growth and Opportunity Act
October 30, 2015

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 506A(a)(3)(B) of the African Growth and Opportunity Act, as amended (AGOA) (19 U.S.C. 2466a(a)(3)(B)), I am providing notification of my intent to terminate the designation of the Republic of Burundi (Burundi) as a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country under AGOA.

I am taking this step because I have determined that the Government of Burundi has not established or is not making continual progress toward establishing the rule of law and political pluralism, as required by the AGOA eligibility requirements outlined in section 104 of the AGOA (19 U.S.C. 3703). In particular, the continuing crackdown on opposition members, which has included assassinations, extra-judicial killings, arbitrary arrests, and torture, have worsened significantly during the election campaign that returned President Nkurunziza to power earlier this year. In addition, the Government of Burundi has blocked opposing parties from holding organizational meetings and campaigning throughout the electoral process. Police and armed youth militias with links to the ruling party have intimidated the opposition, contributing to nearly 200,000 refugees fleeing the country since April 2015. Accordingly, I intend to terminate the designation of Burundi as a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country under AGOA as of January 1, 2016.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
October 30, 2015.

The President's Weekly Address
October 31, 2015

Hi, everybody. Today, there are 2.2 million people behind bars in America and millions more on parole or probation. Every year, we spend 80 billion in taxpayer dollars to keep people incarcerated. Many are nonviolent offenders serving unnecessarily long sentences.

I believe we can disrupt the pipeline from underfunded schools to overcrowded jails. I believe we can address the disparities in the application of criminal justice, from arrest rates to sentencing to incarceration. And I believe we can help those who have served their time and earned a second chance get the support they need to become productive members of society.

That's why over the course of this year, I've been talking to folks around the country about reforming our criminal justice system to make it smarter, fairer, and more effective.

In February, I sat down in the Oval Office with police officers from across the country. In the spring, I met with police officers and young people in Camden, New Jersey, where they're using community policing and data to drive down crime. Over the summer, I visited a prison in Oklahoma to talk with inmates and corrections officers about rehabilitating prisoners

and preventing more people from ending up there in the first place. Two weeks ago, I visited West Virginia to meet with families battling prescription drug and heroin abuse, as well as people who are working on new solutions for treatment and rehabilitation. And last week, I traveled to Chicago to thank police chiefs from across the country for all that their officers do to protect Americans, to make sure they get the resources to get the job done, and to call for commonsense gun safety reforms that would make officers and their communities safer.

We know that having millions of people in the criminal justice system, without any ability to find a job after release, is unsustainable. It's bad for communities, and it's bad for our economy. So, on Monday, I'll travel to Newark, New Jersey, to highlight efforts to help Americans who've paid their debt to society reintegrate back into their communities. Everyone has a role to play, from businesses that are hiring ex-offenders to philanthropies that are supporting education and training programs. And I'll keep working with people in both parties to get criminal justice reform bills to my desk, including a bipartisan bill that would reduce mandatory minimums for nonviolent drug offenders and reward prisoners with shorter sentences if they complete programs that make them less likely to commit a repeat offense.

There's a reason that good people across the country are coming together to reform our criminal justice system. Because it's not about politics. It's about whether we as a nation live up to our founding ideal of liberty and justice for all. And working together, we can make sure that we do.

Thanks, everybody. Have a great weekend. And have a safe and happy Halloween.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:30 p.m. on October 30 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on October 31. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 30, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on October 31.

Remarks on Signing the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015
November 2, 2015

Well, last week, Democrats and Republicans came together to set up a responsible, long-term budget process, and what we now see is a budget that reflects our values, that grows our economy, creates jobs, keeps America safe.

It's going to strengthen the middle class by investing in critical areas like education and job training, basic research. It keeps us safe by investing in our national security and making sure that our troops get what they need in order to keep us safe and perform all the outstanding duties that they do around the world. It protects our seniors by avoiding harmful cuts to Medicare and Social Security. And it's paid for in a responsible, balanced way, in part, for example, by making sure that large hedge funds and private equity firms pay what they owe in taxes just like everybody else.

And by locking in 2 years of funding, it should finally free us from the cycle of shutdown threats and last-minute fixes. It allows us to, therefore, plan for the future.

So I very much appreciate the work that the Democratic and Republican leaders did to get this to my desk. I think it is a signal of how Washington should work. And my hope is now that they build on this agreement with spending bills that also invest in America's priorities without getting sidetracked by a whole bunch of ideological issues that have nothing to do with our budget.

So this is just the first step between now and the middle of December, before the Christmas break. The appropriators are going to have to do their job; they're going to have to come up with spending bills. But this provides them the guidepost and the baseline with which to do that. And I'm confident that they can get it done on time. And there's no better Christmas present for the American people because this will allow the kind of stability and will allow the

economy to grow at a time when you've got great weakness in economies around the world. This puts us on a responsible path, and it makes sure that the American people are the beneficiaries.

So I very much appreciate their work. Let's keep it going. With that, I'm going to sign it.

[*At this point, the President signed the bill.*]

And I want to thank, in particular, the staffs of both Democratic and Republican leaders in both the House and the Senate because they worked overtime to get this done. I want to thank my own staff—in particular, Katie Fallon and Brian Deese, who are standing in the back. They gave up a bunch of lost weekends to make this happen, but they did an outstanding job. We're very proud of them. Okay?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to White House Senior Adviser Brian C. Deese. H.R. 1314, approved November 2, was assigned Public Law No. 114–74.

Remarks at Rutgers University–Newark in Newark, New Jersey
November 2, 2015

The President. Well, good afternoon, everybody. It is good to be in Newark. Let me, first of all, thank your chancellor, Nancy Cantor, for hosting us here today. Where's Nancy? There she is. Your mayor, Ras Baraka, is here. Your Senator, Cory Booker, is in the house. Where did Cory go? He's around here. There he is, right here. Your Congressman, Donald Payne, Jr.

You know——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. [*Laughter*] Over the course of this year, I've been talking to people all across the country about reforming our criminal justice system to be fairer, to be smarter, to be more effective. I've met with police chiefs and beat cops. I've met with prisoners, corrections officers. I've met with families of fallen police officers and families of children who were killed by gun violence. I've met with men and women battling drug abuse and rehab coaches and folks working on new solutions for treatment.

And I have to tell you that from all these conversations, I have at times despaired about the magnitude of the problem. I've asked myself, how do we break the cycle that has young children somehow on that pipeline where they end up incarcerated? And yet what's interesting is, I've been really hopeful as well during the course of this year because what I've seen is that there are people across the board—folks who work inside the criminal justice system, folks who are affected by the criminal justice system—who are saying, there's got to be a better way to do this and are not just asking questions about how we make the system smarter and more effective, but are also showing us how it's done and are actually implementing it.

This afternoon I spent with the mayor and Senator Booker getting a firsthand look at how Newark is helping to lead the way. And as a partner in our "My Brother's Keeper" initiative, the mayor and the Senator and Congressman and others are working in a public-private partnership to focus on disrupting the pipeline from underfunded schools to overcrowded jails. Here in Newark, when it comes to rehabilitating prisoners and reintegrating former inmates into society, you've got organizations that are doing extraordinary work. And that's why I wanted to focus here today, because places like Integrity House, the work that's being done in our Federal ReNew program through the District Court and our U.S. Attorney's Office—they are accomplishing extraordinary things—and when you meet folks who are taking that step to break addiction and overcome great odds and you see what they've already accomplished and what more they're going to accomplish in the future, you cannot help but feel hopeful about the future.

Now, right now there are 2.2 million Americans behind bars—2.2 million. We incarcerate people at a rate that is unequaled around the world. We account for 5 percent of the world's population, 25 percent of its inmates. They are disproportionately Black and Latino. As one of Cory's Republican colleagues, John Cornyn from Texas—no bleeding-heart liberal here—likes to point out, almost all these individuals will eventually be released. More than 600,000 inmates are released each year. Around 70 million Americans have some sort of criminal record—70 million. That's almost one in five of us, almost one in three Americans of working age.

Now, a lot of time, that record disqualifies you from being a full participant in our society, even if you've already paid your debt to society. It means millions of Americans have difficulty even getting their foot in the door to try to get a job, much less actually hang on to that job. That's bad for not only those individuals, it's bad for our economy. It's bad for the communities that desperately need more role models who are gainfully employed. So we've got to make sure Americans who've paid their debt to society can earn their second chance.

And as I said before, we spent the day seeing people who are doing just that: counselors; parole officers; small-business owners who are giving folks a second chance; Federal judges who are not only being smart about sentencing, but are also helping, to the extent that they're going into their own pockets, just to help somebody who is transitioning out get the right clothes for a job interview.

I've spoken to men and women who are part of programs like New Jersey-STEP here at Rutgers–Newark. You're giving prisoners a second chance to start taking college courses before their release so that they can re-enter society with marketable skills.

And I have had a chance, as I said, to speak with folks who are working hard to get back on track. And I just want to highlight a couple of them—I hope you guys aren't embarrassed, if you're here—because I'm really proud of what you're doing.

Daryl Rose was arrested for a drug-related abuse charge in 2013, served 6 months in prison. Today, he's a member of Integrity House—that's a treatment center that I visited earlier this afternoon—determined to become a productive citizen. And he's getting the counseling and support that he needs to achieve his goals. And Daryl's family is with him every step of the way. So we're very proud of Daryl. I don't know if Daryl is here. Are you here, Daryl?

Ashley Sinclair. Ashley is here today; I know that. Where's Ashley? Come on, there you are. Stand up, Ashley. Ashley spent most of her 21 years on the streets and involved in crime. Eventually, she decided she wanted something better for herself, joined a program called Project H.O.P.E., impressed everybody with her work ethic. She earned a place in the Newark Department of Sanitation. And today, instead of getting into trouble on the streets, she's earning a paycheck cleaning up those streets. So we are proud of Ashley.

We want more success stories like these. It's good for everybody. It means less crime. It means less recidivism. It means less money spent on incarceration. It means less wasted taxpayer money. It means police aren't having to arrest the same folks over and over again. It means young people are seeing in their community people who are working. That, in turn, creates economies in those communities that are legal and not just illegal, which creates redevelopment for everybody. And now, suddenly, businesses have more customers, which means they're hiring more, and you get a virtuous cycle.

And that's why today, we're taking two new actions to create more success stories like this. These are actions that I can take as President through my executive authorities.

Number one, my administration is announcing new grants to help returning citizens seize that second chance through education and job training and housing and legal help and children's services. So the—[*applause*]. Five cities are announcing commitments of their own to help folks reentering society to train for high-tech jobs. And we're going to be partnering

with them and others to try to make sure that the good work that we saw here today we can start expanding. All right, so that's point number one, putting some more money in the system.

Let me say, it's nowhere near what we need, but it gives us more ability to create more programs that serve as an example of best practices so it can be duplicated around the country. That's point number one.

Point number two: I'm taking action to "ban the box" for the most competitive jobs at Federal agencies. Now, the Federal Government is a big employer, as you know, and like a lot of big employers, on many job applications, there's a box that asks if you have a criminal record. If you answer yes, then a lot of times, you're not getting a call back. And we're going to do our part in changing this. The Federal Government, I believe, should not use criminal history to screen out applicants before we even look at their qualifications. We can't dismiss people out of hand simply because of a mistake that they made in the past.

And I have to say that, although this is something that I can do on an executive basis, this is an area where Cory Booker, working with one of his Republican colleagues, Ron Johnson, are working to try to pass Federal legislation, a ban-the-box bill that's working its way through the Senate. I believe Congress should pass legislation that builds on today's announcement. And keep in mind some really good, really successful companies are already doing this. Walmart, Target, Koch Industries, Home Depot—they've already taken action to ban the box on their own. And 19 States have done the same.

So my hope is, is that with the Federal Government also taking action, us getting legislation passed, this becomes a basic principle across our society. It is relevant to find out whether somebody has a criminal record. We're not suggesting ignore it. What we are suggesting is, when it comes to the application, give folks a chance to get through the door. Give them a chance to get in there so that they can make their case.

Now, this is not just the only step that we can take. Just 2 weeks ago, Cory, other Democrats and Republicans moved through the Senate a bipartisan criminal justice reform bill. This is a bill that would reduce mandatory minimums for nonviolent offenders. It would invest in law enforcement. It would reward prisoners with time off if they complete programs that make it less likely that they will commit crimes in the future. And there's a similar bill working its way through the House.

I urgently encourage both the Senate and the House to pass these bills. It will not completely change the system overnight, but it will lock in some basic principles that we understand are going to make us a fairer and safer society over the long term. And I am very proud of the work that those legislators are doing. I'm especially proud because it's not typical that Democrats and Republicans get together—[*laughter*]—on useful legislation. I—let's face it. But this is an area where we've seen some really strong bipartisan work, and I'm very encouraged by that.

There are so many Americans who desperately want to earn a second chance. I already mentioned Daryl and Ashley. I'm going to call out one other person, Dquan Rosario. Where's Dquan? He's looking very sharp in his suit today. There's Dquan. Now, Dquan was arrested for his first drug charge when he was 17. At 27 he received a 10-year Federal sentence for drug distribution. In his own words, when he got out he was homeless, had no real legitimate employment history. And it would be easy to write Dquan off. More importantly, it would have been easy for Dquan to write himself off or at least to say, there's nothing else I know, this is the path I have to follow, going back to the drug trade that, unfortunately, he had been raised in.

But something happened inside of Dquan, so he had a motivation to say, I'm going to change, which is really hard to do at 37. It's even harder to do if you've been through a decade or more of prison. So he got involved with a Justice Department program called ReNew. The Federal District Court judge who presides over this program—Madeline, stand up. I just

want to give her credit. The probation officer who worked with him, Kevin, who helps run this program. This isn't in my formal remarks, but I just talked to them. I just think everybody needs to understand what happened here.

So we—with the help of our U.S. attorney, Paul Fishman—right here; Paul, stand up—the Justice Department, the Federal District Court judge, the probation officer—they all set up a system in which Dquan has a community encouraging him to move forward. If he doesn't have the right suit for a job application, they're helping him do that. If he doesn't have enough money to eat that week, they're seeing if they can scrape something together. If he's interested in going back to school, what happened was, is that these folks helped to scrape together school fees for him, including through the Second Chance dollars that we generate through the Justice Department.

And as Dquan just told me, he said, look, I'm not saying that everything is easy; you've got to want it yourself. But because of the investment of these people who are calling him and bringing him in every couple weeks, and Kevin, his probation officer, is problem-solving with him on an ongoing basis, Dquan found a job in medical transportation. Then he pursued his EMT certification. Today, he is an EMT in Essex County. And instead of peddling drugs that are destroying lives, he's saving lives. He's making the community better.

And I just want to highlight this story because here you've got a situation where officers of the court, judges, probation officers, U.S. attorneys, pastors, community leaders, business leaders are all coming together saying, what's the problem we're trying to solve here? The problem we're trying to solve is not just to keep on catching people and putting them back in jail. The problem we're trying to solve here is giving people a foundation through which they can then become productive citizens. And the judge was mentioning how when she saw Dquan or some of the other folks who have gone through this program graduate, that's the best thing that happens to her as a judge, because she understands that's the goal.

The goal is to prevent crime. The goal is to make sure that folks are fairly punished when they break the law. But the ultimate goal is to make sure that folks are law-abiding, self-sufficient, good citizens. And everything we do should be designed towards that goal. And if we're doing a good job there, then crime will go down, and it will stay down.

That's our goal, where everybody has a chance to contribute. And that's what these outstanding folks that I met with here today are committed to. That's what Mayor Baraka and Cory Booker and Don Payne, Jr., and others are committed to. That's what I'm committed to. This is not easy. And as I've said before, we can't have the criminal justice system carrying the entire load of solving all of society's ills.

We're a lot better off if we catch Dquan when he's 5 or 12 or 18 than when he's 37. We're a lot better off if we're investing in economic development and housing and jobs and adequate funding for schools and making college more affordable on the front end. But Dquan's story, like the stories that so many people in this auditorium can tell, is that it's not too late. There are people who have gone through tough times, they've made mistakes. But with a little bit of help, they can get on the right path.

And that's what we have to invest in. That's what we have to believe. That's what we have to promote. That's why I'm so proud of what Newark is doing, and that's what I hope everybody learns.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:15 p.m. in the Herbert M. Ellend Atrium of the Center for Law and Justice. In his remarks, he referred to Madeline Cox Arleo, judge, U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey; Kevin Egli, probation officer for Dquan Rosario; and U.S. Attorney for the District of New Jersey Paul J. Fishman.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Fundraiser in New York City

November 2, 2015

Well, it is wonderful to be with all of you. Because this is a smaller setting, my remarks at the top are going to be very brief because I want to spend most of the time in conversations. There are a number of people I want to acknowledge, obviously starting with Jonathan and Jennifer, who are so gracious. Jonathan is being a little shy. The truth is that I think Jonathan and his family were one of the first fundraisers I ever held in New York City. I've had a lot since then. [*Laughter*] But they were early angel investors, and I could not be more appreciative of everything that they've done for me throughout my national political career.

There are a number of other people obviously I want to acknowledge, starting with somebody who is as tough and as clear thinking and been the best partner anybody could hope for in helping to move the country forward, and that is our leader, Nancy Pelosi.

I also want to acknowledge a number of other Members of Congress who are here—those of you who have not had a chance to meet Ben Ray Luhán, he is doing outstanding work each and every day in the thankless job of being out DCCC. Somebody who slipped the noose and was doing it before and is not anymore—[*laughter*]—Steve Israel. A couple of outstanding Members of Congress and part of your delegation: Carolyn Maloney and Jerry Nadler. I want to single out Jerry for his courage and tenacity and being willing to take some really tough votes, including our most recent push on appropriations.

Well, it's an interesting time. First of all, I think we should not let today pass without noting that I signed a budget today. Now, this is not everything; it's not all done. There are specific spending bills that have to be produced and delivered before the Christmas break. But the fact that we can anticipate going through the next year and a half without manufactured crises and without a weakening of the U.S. economy and ensuring that our national security is paid for, that our Medicare and Social Security are not damaged or cut back, that critical investments that are needed in education and basic research will receive some additional funding—that's a good piece of business.

And I wish John Boehner hadn't waited until he was leaving to decide to work with us on this, but I want to give credit where credit is due. I think that the Republicans worked with Nancy and Harry and the White House the way it's supposed to work. I am reminded—because I think I'm going to see Chris Rock over at the event we're doing in "Hamilton"—of Chris Rock's standup concert. Now, I can't quote him directly because—[*laughter*]—it's not family friendly. But there's a whole sequence where he starts talking about guys bragging about doing things they're supposed to do anyway. It's like "I take care of my kids." I mean, you're supposed to take care of your kids. [*Laughter*] "I haven't been to jail." [*Laughter*] You're not supposed to go to jail. [*Laughter*] There is an element of a low bar of passing a budget and making sure the full faith and credit of the United States of America is sustained.

But having said that, I think that's important. And this would not have happened had it not been for Nancy's incredible leadership and the unity that the Democrats showed throughout these budget discussions, including taking some tough votes on things like, for example, defense authorization. I just want to publicly acknowledge that.

Seven years have passed since I took office. There's almost no economic yardstick by which the American people are not better off than when we came into office. Over 13 million jobs. The economy growing in a sustained way for 6 years now—over 6 years. Seventeen million people with health insurance who didn't have it before. A doubling of clean energy production. A serious effort at curbing our carbon emissions. Real progress on education and college affordability.

Across the board, we can say unequivocally, if Ronald Reagan were asked the question, "Are you better off than you were 4 years ago, or 7 years ago?"—the answer is yes. But the reason this election is so important coming is, we have to be able to protect the gains we've made, and we all know that we've got so much work to do. We know that with just a smarter approach to infrastructure, that we could put people back to work right now and grow the economy significantly faster. And those are jobs that can't be exported and would set the foundation for us to continue to grow for years to come.

We know that if we were investing in early childhood education, that there are a whole bunch of young people who right now are unfortunately headed towards the criminal justice system, who instead would be headed for college and careers.

We know the urgency of climate change requires us to transition faster to a clean energy economy, and that if we're putting money into basic research around energy and addressing some of the efficiency issues in our economy, that we can grow faster and create jobs, and help to lead the entire—in ensuring the next generation has a livable planet.

We know that despite all the successes that we've seen with Obamacare, there's still a lot of gaps in coverage that exist, primarily because there are a lot of States that aren't taking full advantage of Medicaid expansion, but also because there's a lot more work that we can do in terms of improving quality and access, even as we keep costs low.

So our work is not done. And in order for us to make it happen, it's not enough just for us to elect a Democratic President. I will do everything I can to make sure that I've got a Democratic successor. But that Democratic successor is going to need a Congress that is working with the President to advance the values and causes that we care deeply about. Health care does not pass if Nancy Pelosi is not the Speaker of the House. We don't get Wall Street reform done unless we've got a Democratic Caucus who's committed to fairness and transparency.

Issues such as the one that Jonathan has been so passionate about—making sure that we're dealing in a serious way with campaign finance—we're not going to get that done if Mitch McConnell is controlling the agenda going into the Senate, because he said very explicitly that he considers that un-American and a terrible thing to do, putting any constraints on money in campaigns.

So, on any item that you care to think about here, having a Congress that is serious about the things that we care about is vital. And I know I'm preaching to the choir a little bit, but I just want to say this, and I'll close with this, and then I'll take questions. I need people to feel a sense of urgency about these congressional races. They're down the ballot. Typically, the races that are at stake are ones in swing districts. Not every Democratic nominee is going to have embraced your particular pet cause because they're trying to figure out how to manage a challenging political environment. And so you kind of lose track of them. But I tell you what, having Nancy Pelosi as Speaker makes a difference.

And one of the things that I've been proudest about over the course of the last several years, and nobody exemplifies that more than folks like Jerry and others who have taken some tough votes here. Democrats are politicians too. You've to worry about constituencies and polls and trying to get reelected. But we tend to pay attention to facts, and we tend to pay attention to evidence, and we actually listen to reason and arguments. And if it's something that is the right thing to do, even if it's tough politically, we do it. And the country is better off for it. And that kind of leadership has to be rewarded.

So I'm hoping that you guys feel that same sense of urgency that I do about this. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:44 p.m. at the residence of Jennifer and Jonathan Soros. In his remarks, he referred to Reps. Ben Ray Luhán, chairman, and Steven J. Israel, former chairman, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee; former Speaker of the

House of Representatives John A. Boehner; and Senate Minority Leader Harry M. Reid. He also referred to H.R. 1314, which was approved November 2 and assigned Public Law No. 114–74. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in New York City
November 2, 2015

The President. What did I miss? [*Laughter*] What did I miss? It's good to see all of you. Hello, New York! I am annoyed that I did not get to see this show again. Michelle and I love this show. It also happens to be the only thing that I think Dick Cheney and I agree on—[*laughter*]—is that this is a great show. You know when you've brought Barack Obama and Dick Cheney together that you've accomplished something. That is a cultural landmark. [*Laughter*]

Please give it up for Lin-Manuel Miranda and the entire cast. We love you! Jeffrey Sellers and the producers, give them a big round of applause. Margo Lion for always bringing me to Broadway. Our DNC treasurer, Andy Tobias. Yay, Andy! And to all of you, thank you so much for being here—although, this one is easy. [*Laughter*] I mean, you write a check, and you listen to some boring politician talking, now, that's commitment. Coming to this show, you don't get special props for this. [*Laughter*] But I love you anyway. We've got so many great friends and supporters here.

It is always good to be back in the city. I know there may be some Mets fans here tonight, and I just want you to know you should still be proud of a great season. If you're not happy, Josh Earnest, my Press Secretary, is a big Royals fan, so you can take it up with him. [*Laughter*]

Seven years ago, we came together not just to elect a President, but to reaffirm a fundamental belief—a belief that was on display here tonight—that people who love their country can change it. That's in our DNA. That's how it started. What—part of what's so powerful about this performance is, it reminds us of the vital, crazy, kinetic energy that's at the heart of America: that people who have a vision and a set of ideals can transform the world. And that's always been true. That was true at the founding. That was true for women winning the right to vote. It was true for the abolition movement and the civil rights movement. And every single step of progress that we've made has been based on this notion that people can come together and ideas can move like electricity through them and a world can change.

And that faith has been tested at times—by war and by recession and, during the course of my Presidency, by politics and obstruction and by a chorus of cynics who said that we were foolish to keep believing and naive to keep on trying—but thanks to folks like you, this country is moving forward. [*Applause*] This country is moving forward.

When I took office, we were losing 800,000 jobs a month, unemployment on the way to 11 percent. Because of you, over the last 5 ½ years, our businesses have created more than 13 million jobs. The unemployment rate is down to 5.1 percent. The job openings are highest in any time since the 1970s. We were warned we couldn't reform Wall Street or create new protections for consumers or ask the wealthiest Americans to pay a little bit more without stifling the markets and crushing jobs. And we did it, and the stock market more than doubled, and we've seen the longest streak of job creation in American history.

When I took office, more than 15 percent of Americans didn't have health insurance. We changed that. And for the first time on record, more than 90 percent of Americans do have coverage. Insurance companies can't discriminate against anybody because they've got a preexisting condition. They can't charge women more just for being a woman. We were told that this would break the bank, we couldn't do it without increasing the deficits. But so far, we've covered 17 million Americans, and we've cut the deficit by two-thirds. And health care inflation has gone down at the slowest—has increased at the slowest rate in 50 years during

this entire time. And it just so happens, this all started right when I signed Obamacare into law. [*Laughter*]

When I took office, we were hopelessly addicted to foreign oil; we've cut our oil imports by more than half. We have tripled the amount of energy we generate from wind. Twenty times more solar power is generated today than it was when I took office. We were told we couldn't grow American energy without rising emissions that caused climate change, but we did. American energy is booming. Prices are falling. As the economy continues to grow, America has cut our carbon pollution by more than any other country on Earth. That happened because of you.

When I took office, our influence around the world was waning, our standing diminished. And we changed that. Today, America leads the world in confronting new threats. We made sure Iran doesn't get a nuclear weapon. We're making sure that we address climate change globally. We're writing smarter, stronger trade rules for the 21st century. We've begun a new chapter working with the Cuban people. We have brought thousands of brave Americans home to their families. There is not a measure economically by which if Ronald Reagan were here and asked the question "Are you better off than you were 4 years ago?" the answer wouldn't be yes.

And that's just on economics and on foreign policy. But of course, the idea of America that was represented here is more than just numbers, it's more than just statistics. It's about who we are, who's seen, who's recognized, whose histories are affirmed. And we were told, for example, that we couldn't change this country when it came to how we treat people based on who they love. And suddenly, marriage equality is now a reality in all 50 States. "Don't ask, don't tell" don't exist no more.

I just came from Newark, where we were leading the charge to reform our criminal justice system and make sure that we think about crime in different ways so that we keep our streets safe, but we don't incarcerate more people than any other nation on Earth; and we make sure that every child that's born in this country, no matter what they look like, where they come from, what their last name is, that they feel like they've got a place here. They feel like they belong. They feel like they count.

Now, I could go on. [*Laughter*] I've got a longer list. We could talk about the U.S. auto industry or the fact that high school graduations hit an alltime high or the fact that millions of young people are able to go to college that couldn't afford to go before or those "DREAM Act" kids who are, by every definition, Americans except for a piece of paper and we're finally saying to them, you know what, we care about you, we love you, you count.

There's a whole bunch of other stuff we can talk about. But here's what's interesting. I don't know if the Republicans who are running for this office know any of these things—[*laughter*]—because they occupy a different reality, it seems. [*Laughter*] According to them, everything was really good in 2008 when we were going through the worst economic crisis in our lifetimes. Unemployment and uninsured rates were up, and we were hopelessly addicted to foreign oil, and bin Laden was still on the loose. This apparently was the golden age that I messed up. I messed it up.

And Obamacare and immigrants and taxes and deficits all just messed everything up. [*Laughter*] And they're so glum. [*Laughter*] I mean, they're really so frustrated. And you what, look, part of our DNA is, we're always dissatisfied. That's part of what makes America great; we don't rest on our laurels. Right? We always find something wrong. And there is a lot that has to be fixed. Everybody here has got a list of things that we have to tackle.

But maybe what makes us a little different as Democrats is, we try to base our analysis on facts and reason. [*Laughter*] So we don't look at the evidence and see that every time a Democratic President has been in office, the economy seems to be doing a little better than when the Republican is in office. And we don't automatically say, well, you just have to vote for a Democrat every time. [*Laughter*] On the other hand, we don't—we also don't say that if you cut taxes for the very top 1 percent and the economy doesn't do well that doing more of

that will grow the economy by 4 or 5 or 8 percent. We don't do that either because that's—factually seems to be incorrect. [*Laughter*]

They want to repeal the Affordable Care Act—I know that's shocking—and kick millions of people off their health insurance. But when you ask them, well, what is it that is so bothering you about people having health insurance, they can't tell you. Because originally, it was, well, it's never going to work. All right, so then it started working. And then, they say, well, it's going to blow up the deficit. And it's not blowing up the deficit. And then, they said, well, it's going to drive everybody else's premiums up. But that hasn't happened.

And so, at some point, you'd think they'd say, well, maybe we should just try to work to make health insurance even better. Right? It—right? [*Laughter*] Right.

On climate change—now, if you went to a doctor—[*laughter*]—no, let's change that. You go to a hundred doctors—[*laughter*]—and 99 of them tell you you've got diabetes, you've got to stop eating bacon and doughnuts every day—[*laughter*]—and we have to monitor your health, and we've got to fix this—you wouldn't say, oh, they just—that's a conspiracy, they're making that up. [*Laughter*] All 99 of those doctors got together with Obama—[*laughter*]—to try to prevent me from having bacon and doughnuts. You wouldn't do that. That's not what you'd do. There's not a single person who would do that. [*Laughter*]

I mean, it would be funny, but—except this is about climate change. This was an analogy. [*Laughter*] And the planet is warming; 99 percent of scientists have said it's warming. And we've got the Republican chairman of the Senate energy and environment committee carrying a snowball into the Senate chambers to show that there is still snow and that climate change isn't happening. I am not making that up. [*Laughter*] That's what happened.

That's what happened.

Audience member. That's crazy.

The President. That's crazy. [*Laughter*] I was going to quote Kanye, but I can't because this is a family audience. [*Laughter*] But it's cray. [*Laughter*]

And by the way, the same thing is true on foreign policy. I don't want to keep on going, but have you noticed that every one of these candidates say: "Obama is weak. People—Putin is kicking sand in his face. When I talk to Putin"—[*laughter*]—"he's going to straighten out. Just looking at him, he's going to be"—[*laughter*]. And then, it turns out, they can't handle a bunch of CNBC moderators at a debate. I mean, let me tell you, if you can't handle those guys—[*laughter*]—you know, then I don't think the Chinese and the Russians are going to be too worried about you. [*Laughter*]

Anyway. Anyway. Look, here's the bottom line. Politics in this country have always been based on warring impulses between hope and fear. And fear is a powerful thing. And you can have a politics that's based on looking backwards and worrying about "them" versus "us," and sometimes, that can win an election or two. But that's not what's best in us. What's best in us is not fear. What's best in us is hope. What's best in us is the Statue of Liberty and welcoming in immigrants from around the world to seek a better life. What's best in us is when we're fighting to make sure that everybody in this country who's working hard gets paid a living wage.

What's best in us is saying that women should get paid the same for doing the same work that men are doing. What's best in us is when we say that employers shouldn't discriminate because of what you look like. It shouldn't discriminate because of who you love. It should simply base their judgments on the job you do and the character that you display. America is at its best when we care for the most vulnerable in our society. America is at its best when we say that the economy works when everybody's got a shot. That's not just good for workers, that's also good for businesses because then they can buy the car that you manufacture and because they've got decent wages, they can afford to buy the new appliance or buy a house or buy tickets to "Hamilton." [*Laughter*] That's a good thing for all of us—[*laughter*]—when everybody, from the bottom up, has a chance at life. That's when America is at its best.

And I know in this political season that politics sometimes doesn't seem like it reflects the commonsense and the decency and the goodness that is out there. And people get discouraged. It gets frustrating. And we have a system and we've got a media that so often rewards controversy and anger and how loud and confrontational you are.

But that's not America. That's a sliver of America. And one of the great privileges of being President of the United States is, you get to travel all around this country, and you see people from every walk of life. You talk to business leaders who have created incredible companies and changed our lives for the better and you talk to ex-offenders who have somehow found it within themselves to turn their lives around and gotten a job and are now raising families.

You talk to farmers out in little rural corners of the country who understand that they've got an obligation to do something about climate change because they're close to the Earth and they see how it affects them. You talk to hunters who are appalled by children being gunned down in their own schools and say that my interpretation of the Second Amendment is compatible with commonsense gun safety rules.

We've gone through difficult times, and people are scared sometimes. And the ground seems uncertain beneath our feet. And during those times, a politics of fear can get traction. Unless those of us who are hopeful, unless those of us who are reminded of the essential energy and passion of our Founders, unless we get involved.

So my primary message tonight—and this performance undoubtedly described it better than I ever could—is that we can't afford cynicism, and we can't afford to withdraw. We've got too much work to do for that. Our system only works when we recognize that the Government is something—is not something separate, it's us. It's not some foreign entity. It is an expression of our values collectively and who we are and what we believe and what we care about. Justice Brandeis once said, "The most important office in a democracy is the office of citizen." The office of citizen. And that's how change comes about, and that's always been my message.

As I enter into my last year in office, some supporters started getting nostalgic, and so we'll take pictures, and they'll say, "Oh, Barack, I wish you could run another term." And I explain, A—no, first of all, not everybody says that. [*Laughter*] But I explain, A, it's unconstitutional. [*Laughter*] George Washington set a good example. B, Michelle would not permit it, even if it were constitutional. [*Laughter*] And, C, this has never been about me.

When I ran in 2007 and 2008—and a lot of you were onboard—I did not say, "Yes, I can." I said, "Yes, we can." Yes, we can. And so our unfinished business doesn't depend on me or Congress or even the next Democratic President, it will depend on us. It will depend on each and every one of you going back from this performance and being inspired and asking, how am I going to make a difference? What am I going to do? What am I going to stir up? What am I going to be passionate about? What am I going to feel a sense of urgency towards? How am I going to work to make sure that everybody has got a living wage? How am I going to make sure that we are passing on a planet that is livable for the next generation? How am I going to make sure that everybody in this country gets treated equally by the criminal justice system? How am I going to make sure that we live up to our most precious ideals: We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights?

That's your job. That's what this election will be about. Not me, but you. What an incredible opportunity that is. What an incredible gift that our Founders gave us. Let's go change this country. Let's go change the world.

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:10 p.m. at the Richard Rodgers Theatre. In his remarks, he referred to former Vice President Richard B. Cheney; Lin-Manuel Miranda, playwright, composer, and lyricist, and Jeffrey Seller, producer, "Hamilton" musical; Margo Lion, Cochairman,

President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities; musician Kanye O. West; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; and John Harwood, Becky Quick, and Carl Quintanilla, moderators of the CNBC Republican Presidential debate in Boulder, CO, on October 28.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Potomac, Maryland

November 4, 2015

The President. Hello, everybody! It's good to see you! It is good to see you. Well, thank you so much. You just doing a little dance over there? That's a nice little dance. Well, it is just wonderful to be here. First of all, I just want to——

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back. I do.

Please give David and June a big round of applause. We took a couple pictures with their gorgeous family before we came out, and I was hearing about David and how, when he was still in school, he started a beer store and just kept on putting money back into the business. And a few decades later, now is one of the largest, if not the largest, wine retailer in the country. An example of American success. And then, I was listening to him backstage, and I thought, you know, we could run him for something. [*Laughter*] I mean, he's got the slightly raspy voice and—[*laughter*]—I was having visions of him. So, David, just keep that in mind. June, I'm sorry—[*laughter*]—but we may have to do something with that.

But thank you so much for the incredible hospitality in your beautiful home.

John Delaney, your outstanding Congressman, is one of the cohosts here tonight. He actually—unlike some people—is voting tonight. [*Laughter*] And so we wanted to make sure that we give him acknowledgment and a big round of applause because he's doing a great job.

So I was reminded—and this is a little scary—I was reminded that today is actually the seventh anniversary of my election as President of the United States. Seven years ago today. And clearly, the gray hair testifies—[*laughter*]—to all 7 years.

Audience member. You look really good.

The President. Oh, thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I need to hear that sometimes. [*Laughter*] Guys have a little vanity themselves.

But it makes me think about where we were 7 years ago. We were on the way to losing 800,000 jobs a month those first few months that I took office. David probably remembers what was happening in his business. I suspect it was being impacted like everybody else's. The stock market had collapsed. The financial system had locked up not just here in the United States, but internationally. People were losing their homes. People were seeing their pensions diminished. And frankly, nobody knew where the bottom was.

And because of you and your neighbors and your friends and your coworkers, we were able to systematically work our way out of this hole. Because of the resilience of the American people, we've now seen 13 million-plus jobs created over the last 5½ years. People's 401(k)s have been restored. Housing values are on the way back. Our auto industry, which was flatlining, has fully recovered, and we're selling more cars than ever before. And we've seen a growth in manufacturing that is unmatched since the 1990s.

We've cut imports of foreign oil in half. We have doubled the production of clean energy. We have started to drive down emissions. Graduation rates are up, college attendance up. "Don't ask, don't tell" is no more.

There is almost no economic measure by which we are not doing better today than we were that day 7 years ago that I took office. And it makes you wonder what it is that the Republicans are talking about. [*Laughter*] Because in this alternative reality that they have constructed, when you listen to the Presidential candidates they—oh, goodness. Do people

have chairs? Well, feel free to sit down. I'm sorry. [*Laughter*] I couldn't tell from here. Yes, sit down. Everybody has had a—[*applause*].

So, according to this alternative reality that they have created, everything was great until I took office. [*Laughter*] And those were the golden years when we were losing 800,000 jobs, and millions of people were losing their homes, and we were in the middle of two wars, and I came in and just screwed everything up. [*Laughter*]

Now, there's a reason they've got to resort to this alternative reality. It's not enough that they spent the entire 7 years obstructing. It's not enough that they spent those 7 years focused not on how they could work together to pull us out of crisis, but rather focus on how they might defeat me politically. The reason they have to construct an alternative reality is because the same ideas that got us in that hole in the first place are the same ideas that they're promoting today.

This is not a situation in which, as was true with Democrats after we lost a successive series of Presidential elections where Bill Clinton and others pulled back and reflected, what do we have to do differently; what are the new ideas; how do we make sure that we're focused on the middle class; how do we adapt our traditional concerns around the poor and the vulnerable and make them compatible with growth and competitiveness. That's not what took place. You could take the speech of any one of the current Republican candidates and put it side-by-side with what Mitt Romney was arguing in 2012 and what John McCain was arguing in 2008 and what George Bush was arguing in 2000 and 2004, and it would be the same prescription.

They're offering the same thing: tax cuts for folks at the very top who don't need tax cuts; cuts in critical investments like education and research and development and infrastructure that help us grow; cuts to Medicare and Medicaid and programs that mark us as an advanced society because we care for the vulnerable and the infirm and our seniors; a politics that divides and says some are less worthy of our attention than others. The platform is almost identical.

And since the American people are pretty confident that that recipe doesn't work because we've tried it repeatedly and it hasn't worked, they've got to jigger reality to fit their theories, as opposed to adapting their theories to fit the facts.

So our response is, number one, to remind people that there's a lot of good stuff going on in America right now. It's a good thing that 17 million people have health insurance today that didn't have it before I took office. That's a good thing. It's a good thing that we cut the deficit by two-thirds since I signed Obamacare and health care costs have gone up at a slower rate than any time in the last 50 years. That's a good thing.

It's a good thing that jobs are coming back in manufacturing here in America. That's a good thing. It's a good thing that we have been able to bring over 180,000 of our men and women in uniform back from Iraq and Afghanistan so that they can be with their families. That's a good thing.

But it's not enough for us just to settle for what has been done. We also have to describe a vision for where we need to go. And the good news is, is that Democrats across the board, believing in fact and believing in evidence, actually have a vision of how we create an inclusive economy in which growth and competitiveness isn't just generated from the top down, but from the bottom up and from the middle out; a vision that says we've got to make sure that every child in Maryland and every child in America has a great education and can afford to go to college; a vision that says we're going to rebuild our roads and our bridges and our infrastructure to make it state-of-the-art so we're competitive for decades to come.

A vision that says we invest in research and development so we maintain the innovation economy that's been the hallmark of America for generations. A vision that says we're going to make sure that Medicare and Social Security are there not just for this generation, but for future generations. A vision that says everybody should be able to have access to the security of health care for themselves and their

families and they shouldn't go bankrupt if they get sick.

A vision that says everybody deserves to be treated with respect and dignity and equality under the law and that it's a good thing that you are able to marry the person you love, that it's a good thing that we are a nation of immigrants and we're going to make sure that we give the children of immigrants the chance to earn their citizenship here in this United States, because that makes us a better country and a stronger country.

We've got a vision that says that the measure of our strength internationally is not simply by how many countries we're occupying or how many missiles we're firing, but the strength of our diplomacy and the strength of our commitment to human rights, and our belief that we've got to cooperate with other countries together to solve massive problems like terrorism, but also like climate change.

That we've got to pay attention to the struggles that middle class families are going through, and we've got to start looking at what's happening with wages and stagnant incomes and the difficulty people have saving and sending their kids to college; and that our tax laws should be designed to reward hard work, and we should have a minimum wage in this country so that if you're working full time, you're not in poverty.

And if families are working, women should definitely be getting paid the same that men are getting paid for doing the same work. And they should have family and sick leave, because it's hard to work and also keep your family intact. And these days, we've got two-earner households not frequently by choice, but by necessity. And all the hard work of raising families, and Lord knows, watching Michelle, I know how hard it can be. Something like family leave or sick leave is not a luxury, it's not something that we should somehow think is antibusiness. It is what allows extraordinarily talented people to be in the workforce and still do right by their families. And over the long run, we know that employees are going to be more productive and miss fewer days and be more committed and our economy will grow better.

So we've got a vision about where we need to go. And now we've got to sell it. Because, look, it is true that so often the other side is presenting an alternative reality, but what is also true is that we have a splintered media in which that alternative reality is delivered to people all across this country nonstop, every day. There's a lot of noise, there's a lot of misinformation. Basic facts are constantly contested very effectively.

So I may tell you that the deficit has gone down by two-thirds since I took office, but if you ask the average person on the street, they are absolutely positive that the deficit has skyrocketed because of the liberal Obama agenda.

Audience member. Not everybody.

The President. Well, you're right, not everybody. But I'm just saying if you ask folks, have your taxes gone up, I mean, I can show that Federal taxes for middle class families have actually gone down in many circumstances. They certainly haven't gone up. They've gone up for folks in my income bracket. But that is not believed by a lot of folks.

And that's not because they don't want to know. It's just there's a lot of noise out there and not everybody is listening to the same radio stations or watching the same television stations. And so people have a different perception of what's true and what's not. And what they know, what they feel is, is that they're working really hard and they're not getting ahead as fast as they would expect. And they worry about the future of their kids and their grandkids and whether they're going to be able to live out their American Dream. That's what they know. And so there's a dissatisfaction, and there's a cynicism about Government.

And if you tell folks, well, the reason that Government doesn't work is not because Obama or the Democrats in Congress are stubborn, wild-eyed leftists, but it's because the agenda of the Republicans in Congress have shifted so far to the right that they can't compromise on anything, although they did compromise recently on getting a budget,

which was great progress. And I appreciate them for that.

But most folks, they're too busy to follow the ins and outs of filibusters and what's happening in the Senate. So all they know, is nothing works up there, a plague on both their houses. And so then they stop voting. And they give up on the system. And when we don't vote, oftentimes we lose. Because the majority agrees with us on things like minimum wage. The majority agrees with us on investing in education and job training and so forth. But if they don't think it's going to get done and they just stay home, or they figure, you know what, neither side is going to be looking out for my interests, so I might as well buy into whatever social issue or issue of the day comes up as opposed to really paying attention to economic arguments that will give me some relief—that's happened too often.

I say all this not to discourage you. I say all this because we should not be complacent. We've got a great record of accomplishment over the last 7 years. We have the right agenda for America to move America forward over the next 7, 10, 20 years. But we have to go out there and sell it.

We've got to have what Dr. King used to call the fierce urgency of now. Because the stakes are enormous in this upcoming election. And what that means is, is that the kind of engagement and involvement and participation that so many of you displayed 7, 8 years ago when I was running, you've got to have that same sense of engagement and enthusiasm and passion this time out.

We can't afford complacency. I always have to remind people that when I ran in 2008, I didn't say, "Yes, I can." I said, "Yes, we can." We. A President is important. I won't lie. I've got a big plane. [*Laughter*] Helicopters. Although, it's leases, and my lease is about to run out. [*Laughter*] I'm trying to see if we can establish a frequent flier program—[*laughter*]—because I've put in over a million miles on that plane and I'm figuring that should allow me, even with some blackout dates, use a few times a year. But apparently, that's not been the practice. [*Laughter*]

So Presidents are important. They can make a difference. They can help set the agenda. But Presidents without a Congress that's supportive of that agenda and cooperative and thinking about the common good is not going to get done what needs to get done. And a Congress without the support of citizens who are fighting and scratching and clawing for the things that matter to them and their communities and to ordinary families, that means Congress isn't going to be able to do what it needs to do.

Justice Brandeis said, "The most important office in a democracy is the office of citizen." I believe that. And in a little over a year's time, I will get on that plane for the last time, but I am going to be right alongside you as a fellow citizen. And my work will not be done, just like your work is not done. And that means that together we will continue to make sure that my successor is a Democratic President and that we win back the Senate, we win back the House, and we move America the way it needs to move, in the right direction for every person, for every child.

I believe that. That's the politics we all bought into: a politics of hope, not a politics of fear. Let's go out and make it happen.

Thank you so much, everybody. Love you. Appreciate you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:47 p.m. at the residence of David and June Trone. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session During a Panel Discussion at the White House Tribal Nations Conference
November 5, 2015

The President. Am I supposed to make remarks first, or are you going to say something?

Moderator Jude Schimmel. I think we can do whatever you want. [*Laughter*]

The President. You know, I think I'm supposed to make remarks first. I was just feeling so comfortable, I sat down. [*Laughter*] Let me go to the podium first. All right, all right, I'm going to go to the podium. [*Laughter*]

I just feel so comfortable, with friends here, that I was just getting kind of relaxed. [*Laughter*] But I'm going to start off by making some remarks. Everybody, please have a seat. It is wonderful to be with all of you.

I want to thank Jude and the whole panel here of outstanding young people who are going to participate in this panel. I want to thank our outstanding Interior Secretary, Sally Jewell. I want to thank the Members of Congress who are here who are supporting the outstanding work that not just the Department of Interior is doing, but we're trying to get every agency to really focus on strengthening the nation-to-nation relationship that we have with the tribes. So thank you, Members of Congress.

I want to thank everybody who is here, young and old, but especially the young people who are participating in this terrific forum.

When I ran for office, I pledged to build a true nation-to-nation relationship with all of you. And back then, I was just a young adopted son of the Crow Nation. [*Laughter*] Didn't have any gray hair. [*Laughter*] Now I am President Barack Black Eagle. [*Laughter*] And what started out as a campaign promise has now become a tradition. So welcome to the seventh White House Tribal Nations Conference.

Now, traditionally, what we've done is, I've come out and I've given a big speech. And I was telling Jude and others, I just get tired of hearing myself talk; I'm just talking all the time. So, instead of a long speech, I thought I'd have a conversation with young people from Indian Country. And I just want to start off with a couple of brief thoughts.

I've often acknowledged the painful history, the broken promises that are part of our past. And I've said that while we couldn't change the past, working together, nation to nation, we could build a better future. I believe this not only because America has a moral obligation to do right by the tribes and treaty obligations, but because the success of our tribal communities is tied up with the success of America as a whole. And over the past 7 years, with tribal leaders and Federal officials working together, we've made a lot of progress.

Together, we've strengthened your sovereignty. We've expanded opportunity. We've delivered justice. But I think we all understand we've still got more work to do. We need to do more to safeguard tribal consultation rights across the Federal Government. We can continue to help to consolidate and restore tribal homelands. We need to create more opportunities for tribal communities. And that's why the budget I sent to Congress this year would have increased our investments in Indian Country by $1.5 billion. And we need Congress to show that same support for Indian Country.

And one of the reasons I'm so invested in your success is because I've gotten to know so many of you and we've become friends and I've visited more Indian Country than any sitting President. Last year, Michelle and I visited Standing Rock Sioux Nation. Then, we invited many of their young people to the White House.

This year, I met with young people in the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. In Alaska, I met with Native communities and witnessed how climate change threatens their livelihoods as we speak, and I reiterated my commitment to working with tribal nations to protect your national resources and honor your heritage, as we did with Denali. So, moving forward, we'll also review tribal proposals to permanently protect sacred lands for future generations.

While I was in Alaska, by the way, I also had a salmon spawn all over my shoes—[*laughter*]—which I was told, the salmon was happy to see me. [*Laughter*]

What struck me on each of these trips is, when we talk about the future of Indian Country, we're really talking about the future of young people. I don't need to tell you the enormous challenges that they face. Native children are far more likely to grow up in poverty, suffer from significant health problems, face obstacles in educational opportunity. A lot of the young people I've met have gone through

more than anybody should have to go through in an entire lifetime at a very early age. Losing family members to violence or suicide or addiction and struggling with the kind of poverty that is unacceptable in the richest nation on Earth.

In these circumstances, sometimes, it's hard to dream your way to a better life. And these challenges didn't just happen randomly to Indian Country. They were the result, the accumulation of systematic discrimination. But for all our young people have endured, the young people that I've met have also given me incredible hope. I see so much promise in them, so much determination.

In the words of Native American writer Janet Campbell Hale: "Courage has been bred into you. It is in your blood." Courage is in your blood. And you're not alone. I want our young people to know that we believe in you. That's why we started something called Generation Indigenous, which focuses on cultivating the potential of our Native youth. And at least 20 tribal nations have already become "My Brother's Keeper" communities to give more young people a shot at success.

Even as we prepare out tribal youth to succeed in the 21st century, we also have to preserve and protect Native culture and heritage. As I've said before, if you start losing your language and your culture, your sense of connection to your ancestors and touchstones that date back generations, you can start feeling adrift. And if you're living in a society that devalues your culture or perpetuates stereotypes, you may be devaluing yourself.

So we have to preserve those bonds, break stereotypes. I believe that includes our sports teams, because we all need to do more to make sure—[*applause*]—we need to make sure that our young people feel supported and respected.

And that's really what this Tribal Nations Conference is about: extraordinary young people representing the promise not just of their tribes or of Indian Country, but of the United States. Because ultimately, we're one family, and these kids are our kids. They deserve to be cared and loved and nurtured and given a shot at opportunity. And if we do the—our part, there's no limit to what they can achieve, because they have extraordinary talent and extraordinary resilience. I could not be prouder of them.

And so, with that, I'm going to sit back down, and let's start a conversation. Okay. All right.

Ms. Schimmel. Good afternoon, and welcome to the final session of the 2015 Tribal Nations Conference. Before we get started, I would like to briefly introduce myself. My name is Jude Schimmel. I'm 21 years old, and I'm a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Growing up, I had no idea that I would be in the position the position I am today, but through hard work and the help of my family, I was able to receive a scholarship to the University of Louisville, where I played 4 years of college basketball and earned my bachelor's degree in sociology. And I'm also a Nike N7 ambassador and an author. But most importantly, over the past few years, I've had the opportunity to travel and speak to over 60 different Native American communities within the United States to simply inspire young Natives to go out and follow their dreams and do what they love. I truly believe that if we continue to work together that we can get to the point where we preserve our culture and our tradition and also allow and create the opportunities that young Native Americans deserve. Lastly, I would just like to express how honored and how blessed I am to be in front of all of you today and on stage with all these special people.

Next, I would like to hand it over to our panelists so that they can introduce themselves as well.

[*At this point, panelist Tatiana Ticknor spoke in Dena'ina and then translated her remarks into English as follows.*]

Ms. Ticknor. This is me, this is who I am. I am Tatiana Ticknor. I am Dena'ina, Tlingit, and Yup'ik. And I was born and raised in Anchorage, Alaska, and I am 16 years old.

[*Panelist Brayden White spoke in Kanien'keha and then translated his remarks into English as follows.*]

Mr. White. My name is Brayden White. My traditional name means, "He carries the bow and arrow on his back." I'm from the Mohawk Nation, I'm 21, and I'm of the Bear Clan. And I would just like to say that they tried to bury us, but, you know, what they were burying was the seeds for change, and look it, we're all blossoming now.

[*Panelist Blossom Johnson spoke in Diné and then translated her remarks into English as follows.*]

Ms. Johnson. My name is Blossom Johnson. I am Navajo and from Black Mesa, Arizona.

Panelist Philip Douglas. My name is Philip Douglas. I am 15 years old. I am the member of Seminole—I am a member of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, and I am in 10th grade. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Schimmel. So, before we get started, I would just like to clarify and let you guys know that in addition to the panelists' questions, we also have a couple that we got from the online community through the hashtag #GenIAsksObama. But up first, we have Tatiana.

Teachers/Native American and Alaska Native Students/Racism in Schools/Native American and Alaska Native Mascots in Sports

Ms. Ticknor. Hello.

The President. Hello. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Ticknor. So my question is, is there any way you can get teachers to understand Alaska Native and American Indian students more better? And is there a way that we can get rid of or eliminate stereotyping and racism within schools?

The President. Well, the—it's a great question, Tatiana. And first of all, I just really appreciate you guys being here, and we're so proud of you. And I think it's fair to say that when I was their age, I was not making presentations with the President. [*Laughter*] I just want to point that out.

I think it's also important to point out that Jude can really ball. [*Laughter*] So the—she was being kind of modest in talking about her basketball skills. And since I'm a basketball fan, I'm very impressed. [*Laughter*] And her and her sister, I think, have really made all of Indian Country so proud. So we really appreciate it.

I think that in education, the single most important ingredient is the person in the front of the classroom, the teacher. And we've got incredible, dedicated teachers all across the country. And my sister was a teacher. My mother taught. I taught in law school. And so I have a deep appreciation for the art of teaching, and I think it's one of the most important professions in our society.

But part of being a good teacher is being able to connect, right? Part of being a good teacher is being able to see each individual student and say, how do I motivate them, and how do I relate to them, and how do I make sure that the subject matter that is being taught—whether it's math or science or history or English—that I find a link between what's being studied and what people feel and what they've gone through in their lives? And that's true in any community. But it's especially true, I think, if you've got schools with Native American students or Alaska Natives.

When I was in Alaska, when I was in your home State, it really reminded me a little bit of Hawaii in the sense that you have this incredible indigenous culture that kind of seeps into everything, but sometimes, it's not reflected in the curriculum, and it's not reflected in how the schools are teaching and interacting and what the reading materials are. And so I think we have a special obligation to focus on that.

And one of the things that we've asked—that I've asked Sally Jewell to do is, for those schools that are in the Bureau, under Bureau of Indian Affairs jurisdiction, that we revamp the curriculum to get a lot more input from the students and from the Native community and provide more local control so that we are helping to shape and assist what's going to work for those students.

For schools that are basically State-run or local school districts, but have a large Native

population, what we're doing is, we're giving grants to help those school districts think about these issues in a much more serious way.

And, I guess, to your last question, in terms of eliminating racism or stereotypes, that's an obligation of the entire society. But it's especially important in the school. And so my hope and expectation would be that anybody in authority in a school is being very clear the day—first day kids walk in as to what's acceptable and what's not in terms of how they're interacting with each other, how they're respecting each other, how they're respecting different cultures. If a school is not doing that, it's failing.

And one specific element of this that we've, I know, talked about, but I want to give some credit right now is on this issue of schools and mascots, because if you walk into a school the first day and you're already feeling that stereotypes are embedded in the culture and the cheers and all that, that kid is feeling set apart and different. And so I want to give credit to Adidas, and I know a number of their officials are here today. They've really come up with a smart, creative approach, which is to say, all right, if we can't get States to pass laws to prohibit these mascots, then how can we incentivize schools to think differently? And so what Adidas has done is, it said to the 2,000-plus schools that still have Native American or Alaska Native mascots—it said, you know what, we will work with you to redesign your entire sports brand.

And I don't know if Adidas made the same offer to a certain NFL team here in Washington—[*laughter*]—but they might want to think about that as well. But I tell you, for Adidas to make that commitment, it's a very smart thing to do because those schools now really don't have an excuse. What they're saying is one of the top sports companies in the world—one of the top brands in the world—is prepared to come in and use all their expertise to come up with something that's really going to work and that the entire community can feel proud of and can bring people together and give a fresh start. And I really want to give them a lot of credit for taking that step.

Student Loan Programs/Tribal Colleges and Universities

Ms. Schimmel. Thank you, Tatiana, for your question and thank you, Mr. President, for your remarks on that subject. Up next we have Brayden.

Mr. White. Hi, Mr. President.

The President. Hey, Brayden.

Mr. White. Pleasure to meet you.

The President. How are you doing, man?

Mr. White. Good.

The President. All right.

Mr. White. How was your—how will your administration help tribal education departments empower low-income Native American youth trying to get to college that don't have the money to go to college? Like, how can we—how can they be empowered to have those equal opportunities?

The President. Yes. Well, I'll say to all the young people who are here and all the parents of young people who are here, the fact is that an education is really the key to a middle class life in the modern world. And there was a time where, as long as you were willing to work hard, you could support a family without a college education, some sort of advanced schooling beyond high school. It is very hard to do now.

Every job requires a specialization and understanding everything from computers to how to communicate effectively. And so it doesn't necessarily have to be a 4-year education—4-year college, but you need some advanced training.

So the first thing I'd say in terms of Native American and Alaskan youth is, we need to do a better job telling you what's already in place, what's already there. Because the fact of the matter is, we expanded Pell grants to reach millions of more students. We have tried to simplify something called FAFSA that makes sure that—it's basically the form that you have to fill out to qualify for all the various student loans and programs that are out there. It used to be so complicated that a lot of people just wouldn't fill it out. Especially, if your parents didn't go to college, right?

So now you may not have enough counselors in the school, you don't know where to go, and you just figure you can't afford it. But the truth of the matter is, is that between Pell grants and Federal loans and grants and scholarships that are available, there's really very few young people who should not be able to go to college if they've got enough motivation.

So what we'd like to do is to work with the Department of Education, Department of Interior, local school districts, to just spread the word of what's already out there. And we're going to really spend a lot of time on reaching deep into the various communities and make sure that you are getting that information out to students.

Now, the other thing that we're trying to do is to strengthen tribal colleges, because we think there's an opportunity for more young people to get a really good education in a way that is culturally linked and allows young people sometimes to stay at home. I remember one of the first times that I saw you and your sister or heard about you was there was a story that was done about incredible Native American basketball players who oftentimes had trouble transitioning to college because they weren't used to being away from their tribe and their community and, sort of, the challenges of being in an environment where you're just cut off from your people and what you know.

And I think that tribal colleges can serve as an important bridge. In some cases, it may be, you start in that college and then you transfer to a larger university once you've, kind of, gotten more familiar and comfortable with what's required. So we're going to also work a lot on that issue. Okay?

Native American and Alaska Native Education/Balancing Cultural Heritage and Integration in Minority Communities

Ms. Schimmel. All right. The next question we got from online, but it may be a little similar to what you just answered.

The President. Okay.

Ms. Schimmel. The question is: "How can we best encourage our Native youth to pursue an education and integrate while still maintaining our culture, traditions, and languages?"

The President. This—since I've been talking about education twice, this may be one of those where I turn it to you guys and see what you guys think. Anybody want to volunteer some thoughts in terms of something I should know that you think would be especially helpful?

Go ahead, Tatiana.

Ms. Ticknor. So, at my school, we are—since it's Native Heritage Month, we're actually doing a word of the day on the morning announcements every day. So I think all the other schools should do that as well because it raises awareness for your culture and language and it will teach non-Native students language as well.

The President. Okay, that's a great suggestion.

Blossom, have you got any thoughts on that?

Ms. Johnson. Well, for the education part where students can't pay for it or are having trouble paying for it, is I've noticed that some after-school programs can probably provide more information about scholarships, fellowships, and maybe even grants to go to college.

The President. Yes, I think you're absolutely right. If we don't have enough counselors in the schools, then having tribal organizations, non-for-profit organizations, kind of, fill some of those gaps, I think that's really important.

What do you think?

Mr. Douglas. She pretty much touched on it. [*Laughter*].

The President. Okay. My man is kind of low key over here. [*Laughter*] You know what, can I—let me say one thing, though, and I'd be interested in anybody who has an opinion on this. And I know when I went to Standing Rock, I was talking to some of the young people about that. Part of the challenge here for young people—I think this is true for all young people, but it's especially true sometimes for African American or Latino or Asian American and Native Americans as well—is this age-old question in America, like, how do you stay true to your roots and your culture, but also how are you part of the larger community, how do you balance that out?

And I think the one thing that I would say—and there are some communities that have done this better than others—is to recognize that in order for young people to be successful today, you're not cut off from every—the rest of the world, you have to compete. You have to have knowledge which will empower you about how the world works. And it's not a betrayal of your traditions to understand those tools and use them on behalf of your community and on behalf of yourself.

Now, I think what you also then have to do is to be in touch with, though, where you're coming from and not forget that, but that's not always going to be in the environment that you find yourself in. And you can't shy away from breaking out of what you know and going ahead and reaching out and striving in environments that are unfamiliar to you—you're, kind of, breaking out of your comfort zone—as long as you know that you still have home base there with you.

And I think that sometimes people get into a situation where they think, oh, if I'm going to college and I'm learning this or that or the other, then—and a bunch of my friends are still back home and they're not doing the same thing, then somehow, I'm not authentic, I'm not really true to my culture and so forth. And that I don't think is productive thinking. That, I think, we have to get rid of. Because if you—you were just talking about languages—if you learn Spanish, that doesn't mean you're not an English speaker, it just means that you've got one more thing that you know that you can use, and you can translate. If you learn engineering, that doesn't mean you have to forget traditional ways of your people. It just means you've got both. Right? You can hunt, and you can fish, and you can—you've got your native beliefs, but you can also build a bridge and write code. And that's fine.

So I say all that just because, on the one hand, it's important, I think, for Native youth to be supported, connected, and have a place where they're learning who they are and where they come from. But that can't be like a crutch or an excuse to be avoiding what's outside the tribe. Because cultures have to adapt, and they have to grow alongside the world.

And there are communities that do this really well. You think about the Jewish community in America, who—very successful in all fields, but also deeply rooted oftentimes in their faith. I think that there are a number of Asian American communities there—where there's school and then there's a whole set of institutions that teach them their native languages and—or the languages of their homeland. And they don't see a contradiction in it. And I think we have to think about this the same way.

And as I've said, this is not unique to Native Americans. You see this sometimes in the African American community. Michelle came out of a working class neighborhood; a lot of her friends didn't go to college. And sometimes, when she came back from college, people would be, like, "Aw you—y'all all that, aren't you?" [*Laughter*] And she's all: "No, I'm just—I'm going to college. That doesn't make me less Black. That—I'm a Black woman who went to college." And that's, I think, how I want our young people to think. You can do both.

Ms. Schimmel. Thank you again, Mr. President. Up next is Blossom with her question.

Economic Development in Native American and Alaska Native Communities

Ms. Johnson. Okay. Well, first of all, I just want to thank you for creating the Obama scholars program at ASU, because I am a Obama scholar.

The President. There you go. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Johnson. And—[*laughter*]. Thank you. Okay so—I really want to speak about poverty, because I currently live on a Navaho Reservation—well, right now I'm at school, but I live on the reservation too, when I go home. I don't really have a suitable home, and I don't have running water or electricity. So I understand that you went to visit the Standing Rock Sioux Nation, and I know—I've seen pictures of the reservation—so okay—I want to know what kind of programs you have to offer Native American communities who have the worst housing and living conditions.

The President. Well, a lot of this is run through—traditionally has been run through the Bureau. And let's face it, for decades, it was underfunded. It was oftentimes not well managed. It was kind of an afterthought. And part of the reason why, when I came in, we started this conference was to make sure that we had a direct nation-to-nation relationship with all the different tribes.

And our first thing was to just listen to people and find out what is it that you need, what are you trying to do, what are the opportunities that you have, and then, we'll try to design ways to help based on what it is that you think would make the biggest difference. Because obviously, not every tribe is the same. I mean, there are now tribes that are doing really well because of gaming or because of the natural resources that they've been able to harness, have development ideas that they're moving forward on. And then, there are other communities that are having a tougher time.

So the first thing is for us to listen to each tribe and find out, okay, what can we do? On almost every measure—whether it's housing, education, economic development, health care—we've been trying to boost resources that are available. And that's really important, so we're really focused on, how do we build up the infrastructure in reservations that are having a tough time?

It's not acceptable that anybody doesn't have running water in this country. Right? So that's just a straightforward matter of help—getting the help from Congress to help build out the infrastructure that people need.

But one of the things that I've learned in conversations with a lot of the presidents and governors and others who are in the audience is, we have to think about sustainable development. So the idea is not just that the tribe is getting money from the Federal Government. The question is, how do we give tribes the tools whereby they can start generating jobs and economic development and progress on their own terms within their communities? And I think that is where we have to really focus.

I was just talking to one gentleman—because we took photos before we came out—who said they had just signed a contract for a multimillion-dollar clean energy facility. Right? And that suddenly brings resources to the community. It creates jobs. And now that's an economic engine that you can start selling power to surrounding communities using, in a sustainable way, the resources of that tribe and then take that money and plow it back into create more businesses and more jobs. And that, I think, is something that we really want to spend time on and focus on.

But the first thing is just getting some running water. And that requires just an investment. And that's something that we've budgeted; we're aware of it. It's—Congress doesn't always cooperate with me. [*Laughter*] I don't know if you've noticed. [*Laughter*] Yes. Okay. Thank you for your question though, Blossom.

Childhood Obesity/Combating Obesity Among Native American and Alaska Native Youth

Ms. Schimmel. Up next, we have Philip.

Mr. Douglas. Oh! [*Laughter*] Mr. President, my question is, do you have any ideas or programs that could prevent childhood obesity and diabetes for Native youth?

The President. Absolutely. The—because I live with Michelle Obama—[*laughter*]—and she's all about this. When we had the Generation Indigenous and youth summit—how long ago was that, Sally? Couple of months ago? It was in July? I know she talked about this.

Look, that—this is a problem for the entire country. It's now actually a global problem. And part of what's happened is that as our culture has changed, our kids are eating foods that create obesity. They're not getting the same kind of exercise that they did a generation ago. And you combine those two things, and we are seeing this explosion of childhood obesity.

Now, since Michelle started "Let's Move!" and MyPlate and all these other programs, we've actually seen some progress in some areas. But it's still something where we've got to make a lot more progress, because when kids start off unhealthy and obese early on, the likelihood of them having severe health problems later in life are much, much higher. And that means much higher health care expenses for

the society as a whole, which means we then have less money for things like setting up clean water systems and investing in education and college scholarships.

So this is something we can turn around. It starts with young people just having ways in which they can, on a regular basis, get exercise and get healthy meals. And so what we're going to try to do is to work with all the tribes and the schools and make a determination, okay, based on traditions and cultures and your budgets, how do we get more creative about creating meal plans and—that are better for our kids? And how do we program in exercise and—that is going to keep them healthy?

But, I don't know, let's ask the hotshot Division I athlete. [*Laughter*] What—Jude, what ideas do you have in terms of making sure that—because what is true is, is that the incidents of obesity among Native American youth is higher than it is for the general population. Some of that is just poor children are more likely to be obese because they're eating different stuff, and so sometimes, it's more challenging. And in some Native communities, it's hard to find healthy food; there are a lot of what's called food deserts where it's easy to buy a bag of chips, but it's harder to get some fresh fruit or something.

So, I don't know, what do you think?

Improving School Lunches in Native American and Alaska Native Communities

Ms. Schimmel. I would agree that it definitely starts with the youth. I know—and you said, it kind of, like, it was the last generation—I guess that's kind of mine, but I remember being outside, playing outside, doing sports 24/7. And that's obviously changed, especially with the technology these days. But I also know that living in a rural place, like you said, it's very hard to find nutritious food and things like that. So I guess this is another question for you, but I'm wondering, how can we make it to where the food that is available isn't necessarily fast food and it's more—it's healthier for——

The President. Right. One of the interesting things that we're trying to do is to link up local economies with school systems and so that farmers—and this whole movement of farm to fork or whatever you want to call it—the basic idea is, right now most school districts and a lot of rural communities, even though there's food all around, people aren't growing it there anymore. If they do grow it, they ship it to somewhere else. It gets processed, manufactured, stuffed with a whole bunch of stuff that's not necessarily bad for you, gets frozen, gets shipped back. And the question is—and this is going to be different for each community—are there ways in—to link up with local farmers? Are there ways to link up with traditional food sources?

When I was in Alaska, we went to Dillingham on Bristol Bay. That's where the salmon did the—did his thing on my shoe. [*Laughter*] But in Alaska, Alaska Natives get 50 percent of their calories from traditional sources: hunting, fishing, gathering. And that's an example of where—how do we adapt that so that that becomes part of the food chain for kids when they're in school, right? Because if you're—if there's all this salmon out in the ocean, then—which is really good for you, but then you go to school and all you've got is Tater Tots—now, nothing wrong with Tater Tots. I don't want anybody to—[*laughter*]. But you get my point. Or you've got some frozen pizza that got shipped in, when you could be eating this incredible salmon that was fresh caught and is going to be good for you—and by the way, that then gives the fishermen a market so there now making more money. Right? Those are the kinds of opportunities, I think, that we've got to look to.

And local school districts—in fairness to local school districts, sometimes, it's easier for them to take the processed food. And one of the problems that's happened in the way schools are organized these days is, recess is so short and lunch breaks are so short that the easiest thing to do is to, kind of, just defrost something or stick something in the microwave, plop it on a tray, because you've only got half an hour before we send you to your next class.

And this goes back to the education point you guys were making earlier. One of the

things that we should be trying to do is to think of the whole child. Education is not just books. Education is physical fitness. Education is the arts. Education is music and dance and movement and learning how to eat right. And if we have schools that are not designed to do all those things and take care of the whole child, then we're probably making a mistake. Okay?

Economic Development in Native American and Alaska Native Communities/Education

Ms. Schimmel. I have, kind of, something up—to follow up with that. But as you know, all aspects of life connect. But I'm just wondering, since financial situations are typically an issue among Native American families, I'm just wondering how we can get the—decrease the unemployment rates and increase—to get more, better financial situations. Because not only is McDonald's fast, but it's also cheap. So, if we have better financial situations, we would have better opportunity to eat healthier. And——

The President. Yes. Well, as I said before, I think we're working with tribes to come up with economic development strategies. I think it's very important for us to have a—in our nation-to-nation relationships, to have a strategic plan. It's not just a matter of each year let's get a little more in the budget to give to Indian Health Services or this or that or the other—because that's important, but the goal here is how do we create sustainable development for the nations.

And whether it's through clean energy projects, whether it's through tourism and—that's controlled that the tribes benefit from it, whether it's utilization of Native lands, whether it's starting incubators for small businesses on the reservation, all those things have to be stitched together. So, if we're building a road in Navaho Country, let's make sure that that road connects to a hub that makes it easier for Navaho to engage in commerce with the local community. Right? If there are things that the tribes are purchasing from the outside, is there a way to start a business where it's produced on the inside. Because if the tribe is spending money, it would be useful to find areas where potentially you could—a young person like you starts a business, and suddenly, you're producing the pencils or the lunches or what have you. And then, that money gets recirculated. And that increases incomes for everybody.

But as I said, I think when you look now at communities that are most successful, nothing is more important than young people and talent and education. The way that—the most important way that Indian Country is going to improve its economic prospects is to make sure every young person has the skills and talent they need to succeed. And in some cases, that's going to be because they come back to a reservation and start a business or they're managing a non-for-profit or a tribal development organization. In some cases, it's going to be, yes, they leave the reservation and they're working, they're succeeding, they're making money, and now they are finding ways to reconnect with their community.

And we should—and both things are legitimate, right? There's nothing wrong—if anybody here on this panel—Blossom, if after you graduate, you decide, I want to be a businessperson, and you're successful, I have confidence that you're going to stay connected to Navaho Country. And you're going to then be able to give back. And you're going to open up opportunities for cousins and brothers and not just by way of example, but because you're part of that community, part of that tribe.

And that is going to be part of how we also grow the economy. So young people investing in education and really being focused on being able to compete in the larger economy, that's really important as well. Good.

2016 Presidential Election

Ms. Schimmel. Out next question is—we got it from online also—it is: "What measures are you and your team taking to ensure the next administration pays attention to Native voices?"

The President. Well, I've got to admit I'm biased here. I'm really trying to make sure it's a Democrat. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Johnson. That's amazing!

The President. But there are some Republican Members of Congress who represent

Native communities and are really supportive of these issues like Tom Cole in Oklahoma. And so I don't want to sound too partisan.

I mean, part of what we've done is, we've tried to institutionalize just new practices. And my expectation is whoever is the next President, they're going to see that we've been able to build, I think, some real trust with tribal nations. And if they're smart, they'll want to continue what we've done because I think we're really making progress.

And the good news is, is that the tribes now know what's possible so they can hold accountable the next administration and say: "Hey, we were meeting with Obama and his team once a year, and they were going out and visiting us and doing all kinds of things. And we haven't seen you." Right? And I think that can make a difference.

But I do think it's important for the next President to be able to articulate very clearly how they're going to interact. One thing I'm proud of—because a lot of you I knew before I was President—I made a commitment. I made a promise about what I would do, and I've done it.

And the—it starts with, as you're listening to various candidates, making sure that you ask them now before you offer them support, and that's true whether it's a Republican or a Democrat: "Okay, here's what we've been able to build over the last 7 years. Are you committed to continuing it?" And if they say yes, then now you've got something that you can hold them accountable to.

Ms. Schimmel. Since we have more time, Blossom, would you like to answer—ask your second question?

Suicide Prevention Efforts

Ms. Johnson. Oh, yes. Well, I just wanted to let you know that I lost four friends to suicide since middle school. And I want to know how your administration can support health and mental wellness of Native youth and our veterans?

The President. Well, they're two different groups, right? Veterans have some very specific needs. And through the VA, we are really focusing on this. And in the Department of Defense when people are still in uniform, we're focused on this. Letting people know that it's not a weakness, it's a strength for you to seek out help when you are suffering from severe depression or other challenges like that.

With respect to young people, I'd be interested—this is one where I think I'd really like to hear from all of you because this is a story I hear too often. When I was at Standing Rock, I mean, it was just—the number of stories that I heard was heartbreaking. And we can provide more resources, and we are doing so. I've asked Sally and others to really focus on, how do we prevent suicide, addiction, provide more mental health services and counseling? But I think I'd love to hear from you guys who are in it what you think would make the biggest difference, what you think would be most helpful.

So I don't know about—since you asked it, Blossom, why don't you——

Ms. Johnson. Well, I feel like it's very taboo to speak about it in Native American communities, especially the older adults might think that it is. But I feel like the youth are really ready to speak about it, and I feel like there should be a little bit more support in the school system. Because some of the schools I've actually got to work with on the reservation, they don't really have after-school programs. They have—like, they're very—they're, like, really strict on education, but there's really nothing that can connect you to your culture after school or teach you some of your traditions after school. But I feel like some of these are very important to youth. And I don't know, there might be some kind of, like, cultural identity or identity loss. And some of them may be confused and feel like there's no help. So the only situation—the only, like, logical explanation that they might have or they might think is maybe suicide.

The President. Yes.

Ms. Johnson. And for me, I want to, I guess, prevent suicide. And I'm theater. So I do theater. I love theater. And I try to do a lot of that in my work and try to understand why these youth think the only answer is suicide. It could be something at home like abuse, child abuse,

or just, like, their parents might be, like, alcoholics or something. But no one really speaks to these kids.

The President. Anybody else want to offer some thoughts?

Mr. White. Well, I think talking about suicide is very crucial. It should be talked about. We should knock down the stigma of talking about, like, your problems. A lot of people look at it as it's a sign of weakness, and it isn't. It's actually like you stated, a sign of strength.

Like, I lost a friend, a very good friend. He was a—he was at prep school, and he came home, and he committed suicide. Like, I never—we constantly search for the answers, but, like, the answer usually is that there's—it's that stigma. Like, you don't want to be looked at as a weak person. And I think we need to knock down that barrier and have it be known that talking about isn't a sign of weakness.

The President. Anybody else have any thoughts on this?

Ms. Ticknor. I do. So I'd like to shout out my friend Jazmyn over here because she did the Warrior Circle Project.

The President. Hey, Jazmyn. [*Laughter*] So what's the Warrior Circle Project?

Ms. Ticknor. Well, as she explains it, she helps children that think about suicide and also have problems within schools, right? And she talks about them because people can actually connect to youth more, like, youth to youth instead of youth to adult. So I just thought that was a good project to bring up because I work with her, like, kind of.

The President. Absolutely. That's great. Jude, do you have any thoughts on this?

Ms. Schimmel. Through my experience of traveling and speaking and seeing a lot of Native Americans across the country, I've also come to realize that—and growing up and living on a reservation, I've realized that young Native Americans do struggle with—whether it's emotional or mental or physical abuse. I know that it can be frustrating being a young Native American in a society that you feel like you really are the minority and things like that.

But I just feel like we, as Native people, need a resource or need an outlet. And a lot of the times, I feel like young Native Americans are scared to speak about it, whether it's because they feel like they're weak or because whatever the reason might be. But I know it's easier said than done. But there is—we need to get through to them to let them know that that really isn't the answer and that there—you need to find somebody to talk to. But how do we get that through to them?

The President. Right. Well, one of the things—I talked about Generation Indigenous. The goal is to get Native American youth leaders to be able to network with each other nationally. And then, we're trying to set up a youth network digitally, right, through the Internet so that if there's a good idea like the one that Tatiana was just talking about, a program that we know is working, then somebody across the country can learn about it and try to set up a similar model and share ideas.

And I think one of the things that I'm hearing a lot of you guys saying is, is that making sure that young people are supporting each other is really important. Because adults have to be there, but I will tell you from my experience talking to Malia and Sasha that sometimes when I'm talking to them, I sound like—you guys see—ever see "A Charlie Brown Christmas"? [*Laughter*] It's like wah, wah, wah. [*Laughter*] You know? You can just tell they're just looking at me, but the words, like, make no sense to them. [*Laughter*]

And—but I think that how their peers are supporting them and talking to them and encouraging them a lot of times can make even more of a difference than what they're hearing from adults.

Now, obviously, if somebody has got a severe depression, that's a medical issue, and they may need medical help. And if somebody even at a young age is already—has an addiction, they need help. If they are experiencing abuse in the home, then they need adult help and law enforcement help to prevent that, right?

And you're right, it has to be talked about. And we have to be honest about it. But sometimes with young people, everything is magnified. And you're just going through a lot of

stuff, especially in the teenage years. And just having friends and people your age who are bucking you up and supporting you and listening to you and relating to what you're going through, that, a lot of times, can make a difference before it gets worse. Right? So we're going to see how we can help facilitate more of those youth communities around the country.

Brayden, you want to say something?

Mr. White. And just to add no to what you were saying, about, like, when I was in high school—I was a senior—we had a program, and it was called Sources of Strength. And that's what it was; it was a student-to-student peer—if you were getting bullied, if you were—there was problems at home, you could speak about it in.

The President. Right.

Mr. White. Because there's that barrier. Like, it's hard for a student to speak to a teacher about it, but for a student to talk to another student, it was more easier. And it was—a lot of the students were able to relate to it because they might have experienced it in their life at some point.

The President. Right.

Mr. White. So I mean, that seemed to work very well.

The President. Good.

Ms. Schimmel. That concludes our question-and-answer session. I would just like to thank you, Mr. President, and each of our panelists for being up here with us today.

The President. Okay, let's give everybody a big round of applause. [*Laughter*] All right. Good job. [*Inaudible*]—say something?

Ms. Schimmel. Yes, closing remarks. Yes, it's all you. [*Laughter*]

The President. The—so Jude just said I'm supposed to make closing remarks. And the only thing I want to say in closing is just this is an example of the incredible talent and potential of our young people, and it's true in every tribe across the country. We have a huge stake as a country in making sure that they get opportunity, that their voices are heard, and I want to be a partner with you to make sure that every possible door is open to them. Okay?

And they inspire me. You guys inspire me. You make me feel good. Thank you, everybody. Come on, let's get a good picture. Come on. We're going to stand right here, and there going to take these pictures right here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:10 p.m. at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center. In his remarks, he referred to Shoni Schimmel, guard, Women's National Basketball Association's Atlanta Dream, and sister of moderator Jude Schimmel; and Jazmyn Espinoza, founder, Warrior Circle Project. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Notice of Intention To Enter Into the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement
November 5, 2015

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Consistent with section 106(a)(1)(A) of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 (Public Law 114–26, Title I; the "Trade Priorities Act"), I am pleased to notify the Congress of my intention to enter into a free trade agreement, known as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement. The TPP Agreement will generate export opportunities for U.S. manufacturers, service suppliers, farmers, ranchers, and businesses; help create jobs in the United States; and help American consumers save money while offering them more choices. The TPP Agreement will also benefit the other signatories by providing economic opportunity and by strengthening democracy. I am negotiating to enter into the TPP Agreement with the following countries: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam; provided that those countries meet the market-ac-

cess goals that we set out to achieve and agree to high-standard obligations, consistent with the Trade Priorities Act.

Consistent with the Trade Priorities Act, I am sending this notification at least 90 days in advance of signing the TPP Agreement. My Administration looks forward to working with the Congress in developing appropriate legislation to approve and implement this TPP Agreement.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Paul D. Ryan, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Suspension of the Application of Duty-Free Treatment to All AGOA-Eligible Agricultural Goods for South Africa
November 5, 2015

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In accordance with sections 506A(d)(4)(C) and 506A(c) of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), I am providing 60-day advance notification of my intent to suspend the application of duty-free treatment to all AGOA-eligible goods in the agricultural sector for the Republic of South Africa 60 days after the date of this notification.

I am taking this step because South Africa continues to impose several longstanding barriers to U.S. trade, including barriers affecting certain U.S. agricultural exports, and thus I have determined that South Africa is not making continual progress toward the elimination of barriers to United States trade and investment as required by section 104 of AGOA. I have determined that such suspension of benefits would be more effective in promoting compliance by South Africa with the eligibility requirements listed in section 104 of AGOA than the termination of South Africa's designation as a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country, as it would better promote continuing efforts between the United States and South Africa to resolve these outstanding issues. Although South Africa has to date failed to meet critical benchmarks required to address these issues, it continues to express an interest in resolving U.S. concerns.

I will continue to assess whether South Africa is making continual progress toward the elimination of barriers to United States trade and investment in accordance with AGOA eligibility requirements, as well as whether this suspension of benefits is effective in promoting compliance with those requirements.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Paul D. Ryan, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

Remarks on the Keystone XL Pipeline Project
November 6, 2015

Good morning, everybody. Several years ago, the State Department began a review process for the proposed construction of a pipeline that would carry Canadian crude oil through our heartland to ports in the Gulf of Mexico and out into the world market.

This morning Secretary Kerry informed me that, after extensive public outreach and consultation with other Cabinet agencies, the State Department has decided that the Keystone XL Pipeline would not serve the national interests of the United States. I agree with that decision.

This morning I also had the opportunity to speak with Prime Minister Trudeau of Canada. And while he expressed his disappointment, given Canada's position on this issue, we both agreed that our close friendship on a whole range of issues, including energy and climate change, should provide the basis for even closer coordination between our countries going forward. And in the coming weeks, senior members of my team will be engaging with theirs in order to help deepen that cooperation.

Now, for years, the Keystone Pipeline has occupied what I frankly consider an overinflated role in our political discourse. It became a symbol too often used as a campaign cudgel by both parties rather than a serious policy matter. And all of this obscured the fact that this pipeline would neither be a silver bullet for the economy, as was promised by some, nor the express lane to climate disaster proclaimed by others.

To illustrate this, let me briefly comment on some of the reasons why the State Department rejected this pipeline.

First, the pipeline would not make a meaningful long-term contribution to our economy. So, if Congress is serious about wanting to create jobs, this was not the way to do it. If they want to do it, what we should be doing is passing a bipartisan infrastructure plan that, in the short term, could create more than 30 times as many jobs per year as the pipeline would and, in the long run, would benefit our economy and our workers for decades to come.

Our businesses created 268,000 new jobs last month. They've created 13.5 million new jobs over the past 68-straight months, the longest streak on record. The unemployment rate fell to 5 percent. This Congress should pass a serious infrastructure plan and keep those jobs coming. That would make a difference. The pipeline would not have made a serious impact on those numbers and on the American people's prospects for the future.

Second, the pipeline would not lower gas prices for American consumers. In fact, gas prices have already been falling steadily. The national average gas price is down to—down about 77 cents over a year ago. It's down a dollar over 2 years ago. It's down $1.27 over 3 years ago. Today, in 41 States, drivers can find at least one gas station selling gas for less than 2 bucks a gallon. So, while our politics have been consumed by debate over whether or not this pipeline would create jobs and lower gas prices, we've gone ahead and created jobs and lowered gas prices.

Third, shipping dirtier crude oil into our country would not increase America's energy security. What has increased America's energy security is our strategy over the past several years to reduce our reliance on dirty fossil fuels from unstable parts of the world. Three years ago, I set a goal to cut our oil imports in half by 2020. Between producing more oil here at home and using less oil throughout our economy, we met that goal last year, 5 years early. In fact, for the first time in two decades, the United States of America now produces more oil than we buy from other countries.

Now, the truth is, the United States will continue to rely on oil and gas as we transition—as we must transition—to a clean energy economy. That transition will take some time. But it's also going more quickly than many anticipated. Think about it. Since I took office, we've doubled the distance our cars will go on a gallon of gas by 2025; tripled the power we generate from the wind; multiplied the power we generate from the sun 20 times over. Our biggest and most successful businesses are going all in on clean energy. And thanks in part to the investments we've made, there are already parts of America where clean power from the wind or the sun is finally cheaper than dirtier, conventional power.

The point is, the old rules said we couldn't promote economic growth and protect our environment at the same time. The old rules said we couldn't transition to clean energy without squeezing businesses and consumers. But this is America, and we have come up with new ways and new technologies to break down the old rules so that today, homegrown American energy is booming, energy prices are falling, and over the past decade, even as our economy has continued to grow, America has cut our to-

tal carbon pollution more than any other country on Earth.

Today, the United States of America is leading on climate change with our investments in clean energy and energy efficiency. America is leading on climate change with new rules on power plants that will protect our air so that our kids can breathe. America is leading on climate change by working with other big emitters like China to encourage and announce new commitments to reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions. In part because of that American leadership, more than 150 nations representing nearly 90 percent of global emissions have put forward plans to cut pollution.

America is now a global leader when it comes to taking serious action to fight climate change. And frankly, approving this project would have undercut that global leadership. And that's the biggest risk we face: not acting.

Today, we're continuing to lead by example. Because ultimately, if we're going to prevent large parts of this Earth from becoming not only inhospitable, but uninhabitable in our lifetimes, we're going to have to keep some fossil fuels in the ground rather than burn them and release more dangerous pollution into the sky.

As long as I'm President of the United States, America is going to hold ourselves to the same high standards to which we hold the rest of the world. And 3 weeks from now, I look forward to joining my fellow world leaders in Paris, where we've got to come together around an ambitious framework to protect the one planet that we've got while we still can.

If we want to prevent the worst effects of climate change before it's too late, the time to act is now. Not later, not someday. Right here, right now. And I'm optimistic about what we can accomplish together. I'm optimistic because our own country proves every day, one step at a time, that not only do we have the power to combat this threat, we can do it while creating new jobs, while growing our economy, while saving money, while helping consumers, and most of all, leaving our kids a cleaner, safer planet at the same time.

That's what our own ingenuity and action can do. That's what we can accomplish. And America is prepared to show the rest of the world the way forward.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:58 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

The President's Weekly Address
November 7, 2015

Hi, everybody. For decades, too many working Americans went without the security of health insurance, and their financial well-being suffered because of it. We've begun to change that. As the Affordable Care Act has taken effect, we've covered 17.6 million Americans. Since 2010, the uninsured rate has decreased by 45 percent. And for the first time, more than 90 percent of Americans are covered.

If you haven't gotten covered yet, or if you care about someone who hasn't gotten covered yet, now's your chance. It's open enrollment season for the health insurance marketplace. What that means is, with a few clicks on healthcare.gov, you'll find private insurance companies competing for your business. You can compare plans and choose the one that's right for your family. In fact, most Americans will find an option that costs less than $75 a month. Even if you already have insurance through the marketplace, check it out. Shopping around can save you a lot of money. Last year, consumers who shopped saved almost $400.

Take the story of a man named Phil Viso, who e-mailed me earlier this year. Phil's a software developer from my hometown of Chicago. Last winter, he had an idea for a new app and decided to start his own company. And that can be scary when you need to get your own insurance. But Phil logged on to healthcare.gov, answered a few questions, picked a plan, and even found out he was eligible for a tax credit that saved him money.

And here's what he wrote: "I'm still sort of in shock about how great the experience of signing up for health care was. . . . I will have a lot to worry about over the course of the year as I try to get my app released, but thankfully, good health care will not be one of those worries."

After he sent me that e-mail, Phil ended up getting a new and better job anyway. But that's the whole point of health insurance. Peace of mind. And under the Affordable Care Act, if you want to change jobs, go back to school, or chase that new idea, you can do it without worrying about going broke if you get sick. If you've got a preexisting condition—diabetes or cancer or heartburn or a heart attack—you can no longer be charged more or denied coverage. You can no longer be charged more just for being a woman. And preventive care like checkups and immunizations now come with no additional out-of-pocket costs.

What we're talking about is no longer just a law, and it's certainly not the myths and scare tactics that the cynics have peddled our way for years. This is reality. This is health care in America. And the bottom line is, Americans like it. They're happy with their plans, and they're happy with their premiums.

So join them. Give it a shot. Check out healthcare.gov, cuidadodesalud.gov, or call 1–800–318–2596 to find a plan that's right for you or someone you care about.

And by the way, if you live in one of the 20 cities participating in our Healthy Communities Challenge, I want to see how many of your neighbors you can get to sign up. I'll come visit the city that enrolls the highest percentage of folks who aren't covered right now. That's a promise.

After all, this country is at its best when we look out for each other. And together, we can help more Americans get the security that they and their families deserve.

Thanks, everybody. Have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:05 p.m. on November 6 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on November 7. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 6, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on November 7.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel
November 9, 2015

President Obama. Well, it is very good to welcome once again Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu to the Oval Office. There's no foreign leader who I've met with more frequently, and I think that's a testimony to the extraordinary bond between the United States and Israel.

Shooting at the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center in Amman, Jordan

Before I get started, I just want to say a brief word about the Jordanian attack that we discovered earlier, the fact that someone who dressed in military uniform carried out an attack at a training facility in which it appears that there may have been two or three U.S. citizens killed and a number of other individuals injured. Obviously, a full investigation is taking place. We take this very seriously, and we'll be working closely with the Jordanians to determine exactly what happened. But at this stage, I want to just let everyone know that this is something we're paying close attention to. And at the point where the families have been notified, obviously, our deepest condolences will be going out to them.

Death of Former President Yitzhak Navon of Israel

I also want to extend my condolences to the Israeli people on the passing of former President Navon. Obviously, he was an important figure in Israeli politics. And we extend heartfelt condolences to his family.

Israel-U.S. Relations

This is going to be an opportunity for the Prime Minister and myself to engage in a wide-ranging discussion on some of the most pressing security issues that both our countries face. It's no secret that the security environment in the Middle East has deteriorated in many areas. And as I've said repeatedly, the security of Israel is one of my top foreign policy priorities. And that has expressed itself not only in words, but in deeds.

We have closer military and intelligence cooperation than any two administrations in history. The military assistance that we provide we consider not only an important part of our obligation to the security of the State of Israel, but also an important part of U.S. security infrastructure in the region, as we make sure that one of our closest allies cannot only protect itself, but can also work with us in deterring terrorism and other security threats.

In light of what continues to be a chaotic situation in Syria, this will give us an opportunity to discuss what's happening there. We'll have an opportunity to discuss how we can blunt the activities of ISIL, Hizballah, other organizations in the region that carry out terrorist attacks. A lot of our time will be spent on a memorandum of understanding that we can potentially negotiate. It will be expiring in a couple of years, but we want to get a head start on that to make sure that both the United States and Israel can plan effectively for our defense needs going forward.

We'll also have a chance to talk about how implementation of the Iran nuclear agreement is going. It's no secret that the Prime Minister and I have had a strong disagreement on this narrow issue, but we don't have a disagreement on the need to making sure that Iran does not get a nuclear weapon, and we don't have a disagreement about the importance of us blunting destabilizing activities that Iran may be taking place. And so we're going to be looking to make sure that we find common ground there.

And we will also have an opportunity to discuss some of the concerns that both of us have around violence in the Palestinian Territories. I want to be very clear that we condemn in the strongest terms Palestinian violence against innocent Israeli citizens. And I want to repeat once again, it is my strong belief that Israel has not just the right, but the obligation to protect itself.

I also will discuss with the Prime Minister his thoughts on how we can lower the temperature in—between Israelis and Palestinians, how we can get back on a path towards peace, and how we can make sure that legitimate Palestinian aspirations are met through a political process, even as we make sure that Israel is able to secure itself.

And so this is going to be a lot of work to do, with too little time, which is why I will stop here and just once again say, welcome.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Thank you.

President Obama. Thank you.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Thank you.

President Obama. Thank you.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Mr. President, first let me express the condolences of the people of Israel for the loss of American lives. We're with you. We're with each other in more ways than one. And I want to thank you for this opportunity to strengthen our friendship, which is strong; strengthen our alliance, which is strong. I think it's rooted in shared values. It's buttressed by shared interests. It's driven forward by a sense of a shared destiny.

We are obviously tested today in the instability and insecurity in the Middle East, as you described it. I think everybody can see it: with the savagery of ISIS, with the aggression and terror by Iran's proxies and by Iran itself. And the combination of turbulence has now displaced millions of people, has butchered hundreds of thousands. And we don't know what will transpire.

And I think this is a tremendously important opportunity for us to work together to see how we can defend ourselves against this aggression and this terror; how we can roll it back. It's a daunting task.

Equally, I want to make it clear that we have not given up our hope for peace. We'll never give up our hope for peace. And I remain

committed to a vision of peace of two states for two peoples, a demilitarized Palestinian state that recognizes the Jewish State.

I don't think that anyone should doubt Israel's determination to defend itself against terror and destruction, but neither should anyone doubt Israel's willingness to make peace with any of its neighbors that genuinely want to achieve peace with her. And I look forward to discussing with you practical ways in which we can lower the tension, increase stability, and move towards peace.

And finally, Mr. President, I want to thank you for your commitment to further bolstering Israel's security in the memorandum of understanding that we're discussing. Israel has shouldered a tremendous defense burden over the years, and we've done it with the generous assistance of the United States of America. And I want to express my appreciation to you and express the appreciation of the people of Israel to you for your efforts in this regard during our years of common service and what you are engaging in right now: how to bolster Israel's security, how to maintain Israel's qualitative military edge so that Israel can, as you've often said, defend itself, by itself, against any threat.

So, for all of these reasons, I want to thank you again for your hospitality, but even more so for sustaining and strengthening the tremendous friendship and alliance between Israel and the United States of America.

President Obama. Good.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

President Obama. You're welcome. Good. Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:34 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Anwar Abu Zaid, suspected gunman in the shooting at the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center in Amman, Jordan; and James Damon Creach and Lloyd "Carl" Fields, Jr., Department of State contractors who were killed in the shooting in Amman. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, also known as ISIS.

Remarks at an Organizing for Action Summit
November 9, 2015

The President. Hello, OFA! Well, everybody, give Jordan a big round of applause.

All right, everybody, sit down. Sit down. Settle down. This is a rowdy crowd, as usual.

It's always good to be with OFA. It's a little bit like coming home. And we've got folks from all across the country here, every walk of life. An exceptionally good-looking crowd. [*Laughter*] But it is wonderful to see all of you. I see some familiar faces. I see some people who I haven't seen before. So just a little refresher on how this came about.

It started 8 years ago, when people of all different backgrounds and political beliefs came together with a simple conviction: that people who love their country can change it. And on that campaign, we tried something different. We had to because you had a candidate named Barack Obama—[*laughter*]—who, when I look back at the pictures, I looked like I was 14 or something. [*Laughter*] So, clearly, we weren't going to be able to run a conventional campaign. And because of my background, because of the work I had done as an organizer and helping put together voter registration drives, there was a bias on our part for grassroots action.

And so we put power in your hands. We organized. We had offices in every great corner of this country. It didn't matter whether it was a red State or a blue State. Everywhere we went, we said if there's just two volunteers or one volunteer who gets another one—[*laughter*]—then we're game. And we'll work with you.

And we trusted our volunteers with a simple set of organizing principles: respect people, empower people, include people, listen to people, find out what's on their minds, find out what's moving them—so that this wasn't a top-

down affair, but this was a bottom-up affair. And people could come up with their own ideas about how to get people involved and what to emphasize and how to organize themselves. And together, we created a movement for change that couldn't be denied.

Some of you were there from the very beginning. And all of you are heirs to that movement, including me. And I couldn't be prouder of what you've done and everything that you continue to do. Because there are now 250 Organizing for Action chapters across the country. We're training anywhere from 2,000 to 5,000 Organizing fellows every year with the skills that are required to make a difference. We're not telling them what issues they should care about. We're saying here are the tools you need for civic participation to help move the country in a better direction.

And when you all go back into your communities, you're not giving—you're not given marching orders from me or from Washington or anybody else, you figure out what's important in your communities, and you organize around it. You be the change that you want to come about.

And it's because of committed citizens like you that this country keeps moving forward. That's been the spirit of the entire 7 years that we've been here. Sometimes, people haven't reported on it. [*Laughter*] Sometimes, there's been so much obsession with the ins and outs of the legislative process here in Washington, or lack thereof, that folks don't realize all the work that has been taking place on the ground. But you've been part of that. You've been making it happen.

When we took office, we were losing 800,000 jobs a month, unemployment rate was going up to 10 percent. And over the last 5 years, 5½ years, our businesses have created more than 13.5 million new jobs, and the unemployment rate is down to 5 percent. That's work you did.

We were told we couldn't put new rules on Wall Street or more protections for consumers or ask the wealthiest of Americans to pay their fair share of taxes without crushing job growth. But we did it. And the stock market doubled. And we've seen the longest streak of private sector job creation on record. That happened because of you.

When I took office, more than 15 percent of Americans went without the security of health insurance. And for the first time, because of you, more than 90 percent of Americans are now covered; more than 17 million people are able to get health insurance. Insurance companies can't discriminate against people with preexisting conditions or charge women more just for being women. That all happened because of you.

We were told that if we did get health insurance passed, we'd be adding to the deficit; it would explode. [*Laughter*] Well, you know what, we've covered 17.6 million Americans so far. And in the process, the deficit has been cut by two-thirds. That's all thanks to you. That's what you did. That's why we've seen the longest streak of private sector job growth on record. That's why we've gotten the uninsured rolls down.

Same is true on energy policy. We were told we were going to be hopelessly addicted to foreign oil forever. Well, we've cut our oil imports by more than half; tripled the amount of wind energy, increased by 20 times the amount of solar energy; doubled clean energy overall—steady sources of good jobs that can't be outsourced. And we're also able to keep prices low for energy for families, while at the same time reducing the carbon emissions that create climate change.

American energy is booming, prices are falling, and we use less energy. Our—even as our economy is growing, America has cut our carbon pollution more than any other nation—advanced nation on Earth. Think about that. That's your accomplishments.

On foreign policy, our influence was waning when we came in, standing diminished. Today, America leads the world in confronting new threats: making sure Iran doesn't get a nuclear weapon; making sure that we have smarter, stronger trade rules for the 21st century.

America is leading the world towards dealing with climate change in a serious way. Global action—one of the reasons the State

Department decided the Keystone pipeline would not serve the national interests. Approving that project would have undercut our global leadership. And we've got to lead by example. Because ultimately, if we're going to prevent large parts of the Earth from becoming not only inhospitable, but uninhabitable, then we're going to have to keep some fossil fuels in the ground rather than burn them. We're going to have to reduce the amount of dangerous pollution released in the skies. We're going to have to make sure that we develop the clean energy alternatives that are sustainable.

And as long as I'm President, and as long as you're out there organizing, America is going to hold ourselves to the same high standards with which we want to hold the rest of the world.

So here's the bottom line: Whether you are working on the high cost of college tuition or you are working at the grassroots to make sure that we've got commonsense gun safety laws that prevent the kinds of shootings that we see in so many parts of our country, you know we've got more work to do. You wouldn't be here if you didn't think we had more work to do. When the cynics tell us we can't change this country for the better, we know they're wrong. We've got proof. We've made those changes.

When people said marriage equality is not going to happen, it's now the reality in 50 States. "Don't ask, don't tell" is something that exist. [*Laughter*] American manufacturing: People were sure it was over; now it's growing, creating jobs. The American auto industry that was on the verge of collapse has come back, selling more cars and trucks than it has in more than a decade. Housing market healed. High school graduation rates hit 80 percent for the first time. We're welcoming DREAMers, telling them that they belong and that we welcome them. This is progress.

But you know we've got more work to do, because the progress isn't guaranteed. It's not inevitable. It's something that has to be fought for with discipline and persistence and hope instead of fear.

And that's where you come in. That's why your organizing skills are more important than ever. We've still got to keep rebuilding an economy that rewards hard work, and gives everybody—not just those at the top—a shot at success. And we had a good jobs report last week. Unemployment went down, wages are starting to go up the way they should. But we've got a lot of catching up to do because people—a lot of folks haven't gotten a raise in a very long time. We've got keep working to make sure that the hardest working Americans get a raise. We've got to make sure that women are getting paid the same as men for doing the same work that a man is doing.

On climate change, all the work that we've done on the clean power plant rule and doubling fuel-efficiency standards on cars, it's not going to be enough. We've got more to do. And we've got to educate our communities to understand that this is not a hopeless cause, but we have to take it seriously if we want to leave our kids a safe and prosperous and habitable planet.

We've still got to work—our work cut out for us to fix a broken immigration system. At a time when we've got so many people playing on anti-immigrant fears, we've got to remind people that this is a nation of immigrants. That's how this country got built. And by the way, those immigrants were from everywhere. I was—there was a beautiful—I'm trying to remember what magazine I saw it, but they had a picture of immigrants from Ellis Island. And this was from the 1800s, early 1900s, and you had folks from Sweden and Bulgaria, and they were all in their native outfits. And the—they didn't look like—they did not look as if they had just hopped off a jet and were all spruced up. I mean, they were strivers, but they were escaping poverty and in search of a better life. And a lot of them didn't have great educations, but they knew that if they were able to get here, that their kids would have a great education.

The notion that somehow this generation of immigrants is different than the past is just not true. The only thing that's happened is, is just we forgot where we came from. You know?

We're going to have to work hard to build a smarter, fairer criminal justice system. We've got to work hard to make sure our kids are safe from the mayhem of gun violence, tell them their lives do matter.

None of this unfinished business will be completed in the next 14, 15 months. It's not going to be completed within my Presidency or the next or the Presidency after that. But that's the thing about America: The task of perfecting our Union is never complete.

But, OFA, understand this: I may only hold this office for another 14 months, but I'm not going anywhere. I am—I will still hold the most important office in our democracy, and that's the office of citizen. And the only that's going to be happening is, is that I'll get a chance to visit you more often because I won't have—it won't be such a hassle for me to move around. You know? [*Laughter*]

The point is, when I ran for this office, I did not say: "Yes, I can. Just leave it to me." [*Laughter*] What did I say?

Audience members. Yes, we can!

The President. Yes, we can. Our unfinished business does not depend solely on me or on a Member of Congress or the next President we elect. It depends on us: what we, the people, can do together.

And that's something that I'm going to be focusing on in my final year in office: the idea of an active, involved, engaged citizenship. That's what I'm going to be focused on after I leave office: an engaged, active, focused citizenship.

So, if you want to help me, OFA——

Audience member. We do.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. ——I need you to stay involved. I need you stay active. I need you to recruit other citizens. We've got to keep organizing. We've got to keep mobilizing. We've got to lift up issues we care about. We have to pursue referenda and ballot initiatives that can move this country forward. We've got to get organized at the State and local levels. We've got to inform people about the issues before they vote on them. We've got to make sure they turn out to vote. We've got to make sure they know where their leaders stand. If their leaders don't stand in a tenable position, we need to get new leaders.

We need to keep fighting to make sure that this country is one where it doesn't matter what you look like or where you come from, who you love, you can make it if you try. That's what you're all about. I am so proud of all of you. I'm so proud to be standing with you and marching with you. And I'm going to keep on going as long as you'll have me. All right?

Thank you, OFA. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:50 p.m. at the St. Regis Washington, DC hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Jordan Scruggs, volunteer, Organizing for Action.

Remarks at an Organizing for Action Dinner
November 9, 2015

The President. I've got to sign Trina's remarks here real quick. Everybody, have a seat while I'm doing this. [*Laughter*]

How's it going, everybody? Well, listen, I just gave a big speech, so I'm not going to give a long one here. Usually, in these kinds of settings, I may give some brief remarks at the top, and then the press will leave, and I'll be able to do a little bit of Q&A.

But I just want everybody to know that when I listen to Trina, I am reminded of why I got into politics. Because I was raised by a single mom, and she was somebody who was unlikely to be involved in activism of any sort, grew up in a small Kansas town, and then, her parents moved to Seattle. Had a baby when she was only 18 years old, but ultimately, ended up being involved in development in poor countries and women's empowerment and giving them microloans to start their own businesses. And taught me so much about what was important and the values that I care about and the belief that if you empower people, if you give them the tools, then they can do

amazing things. But you just have to have confidence that good things happen because ordinary people get a chance. And when that happens, good things happen to the economy. When that happens, good things happen in our politics. When that happens, great things happen in our culture.

And so, as I was listening to Trina, I think you're absolutely right. I think—Ashley?

Organizing for Action volunteer Trina Longacre. It's Ashley.

The President. I think Ashley is watching you right now and you're empowering her, and then she in turn is going to empower somebody else. And that's at the core, the faith of my politics. And that's why all of you have hung in there so tough all these years, through all the ups and downs and twists and turns—also because you're a little scared of Sara—[*laughter*]—because she's a hard taskmaster.

So where are we right now? The economy has improved by every measure. The fact of the matter is, is that if you ask the question Ronald Reagan said was the most important thing to ask about a Presidency, and that is, "Are you better off than you were 4 years ago?" You are. We've made great strides on health care. We've made strides in education and access to college. We've made serious strides in clean energy. You know the statistics.

But where we haven't made as much progress as I would like is in people feeling connected to their government and people feeling control over their lives. And I think there are a lot of reasons for that, but a lot of it just has to do with the fact that this brand of politics a lot of people in power find threatening. They've got a different theory: that somehow the country works better when you discourage people from voting and you discourage people from getting facts and evidence and information and think that their interests are advanced by dividing each other rather than us finding common ground.

And it's not necessarily just some big conspiracy. A lot of it has to do with the way our societies are organized now, because of the nature of communities and technology. And so, often, it breeds isolation. And we each find refuge in media that confirms our biases as opposed to trying to get us to open up our attitudes and to see the world through other people's eyes and standing in other people's shoes.

And yet when you look at what ails our democracy, more than any material issue, it is actually this: this sense of do I have the power to determine the shape of my life and my communities? Do I have the ability to make sure that my values are heard? Do I have a community with which to find meaning? Those things are hard to measure, but those are things that matter deeply. And our democracy only works when people are involved.

If you back to the earliest years of this democracy and you look at de Tocqueville writing about America, what set us apart was the degree to which we were involved and engaged. And if something was broken, we decided we're going to go fix it. We're not going to just complain. We're not going to throw up our hands hopelessly. No, we're going to figure out a better way to do this thing. And wave after wave of grassroots reform is what made everything from the 40-hour work week, to the woman's right to vote, to the civil rights movement, to ending disastrous wars. It was because people said, no, we're Americans: I want to change something.

So, OFA is an embodiment of this hope that we can get involved. But it's more than just a hope; it's a belief that we can find practical applications of it and pass on skills and get people involved. And if you've met any of the young people who are some of the OFA fellows here, you know that it works. And they are already doing amazing things. And they look really young each year that passes. [*Laughter*] It's, like, they're starting, disturbingly, to look like Malia. [*Laughter*] And there's a reason for that, because Malia is about to go to college, and I'm getting old. But that's okay. As long as I see what these young people are doing, I have confidence in the future of this country. But we just want to make sure that we're duplicating that. And that does not happen if it's not for the support of so many people around this room.

So, for the fellows who are here, I couldn't be prouder of you. You are an embodiment of what this organization is about. For the organizers and staff of OFA, I couldn't be prouder of you, because you used to be these young kids. I remember. [*Laughter*] But you're passing it on and keeping it going. For those of you who are supporting this with your skills and talent and your checkbooks, we are truly grateful. Because I'm reminded of Bobby Kennedy's speech, "Ripples of Hope." That hope is like that pebble that lands in the lake. And this ever-expanding set of ripples, you don't know exactly how it's going to change the country. But this young lady, Feroza, and Ashley, Trina's daughter, they're going to do something that's remarkable. And that's going to be our greatest legacy. More important than any bill we pass. More important than any law we advance. It's creating this movement of citizenship around this country.

So thank you for all the participation and all the great work you guys are doing. All right? Thanks, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:19 p.m. at the St. Regis Washington, DC hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Sara El-Amine, national grassroots organizing director, Organizing for Action. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Death of Former Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Chair Jacqueline Berrien
November 9, 2015

Michelle and I were saddened to learn of the passing of Jacqueline Berrien, former Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Jackie's leadership and passion for ensuring everyone gets a fair chance to succeed in the workplace has changed our country for the better. She spent her entire career fighting to give voice to underrepresented communities, from her work at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund to her advocacy at the American Civil Liberties Union. At the EEOC, she fought hard every day to make real our Nation's promise of equal opportunity for all. She injected new life into the EEOC, with new ideas and strategies that helped refocus the commission on its enduring mission: protecting the most fundamental rights of all Americans. We offer our gratitude for her service, and our thoughts and prayers are with all those who loved her dearly.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Iran
November 10, 2015

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to Iran that was declared in Executive Order 12170 of November 14, 1979, is to continue in effect beyond November 14, 2015.

Our relations with Iran have not yet returned to normal, and the process of implementing the agreements with Iran, dated January 19, 1981, is still under way. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to

continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12170 with respect to Iran.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Paul D. Ryan, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D of this volume.

Remarks at a Veterans Day Ceremony in Arlington, Virginia
November 11, 2015

Please be seated. Thank you. Thank you, Bob, for your service to our Nation as an Army Airborne Ranger and your tireless work on behalf of your fellow veterans. To Vice President Joe Biden, General Dunford; Major General Becker, distinguished guests; to our outstanding veterans service organizations and their leadership; to our men and women in uniform; and most of all, to our proud veterans and your families: It is a great privilege to be with you once again. And to Captain Florent Groberg, as Bob just mentioned, tomorrow it will be my honor to present you with the Medal of Honor, our Nation's highest military decoration.

To all our veterans here today and to veterans across America, whether you served on the beaches of Europe, the jungles of Asia, the deserts of the Middle East; whether you served here at home or overseas, in wartime or in peace; whether you served proudly in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, or Coast Guard—you are part of an unbroken chain of patriots who have served this country with honor through the life of our Nation.

On these sacred grounds, where generations of heroes have come to rest, we remember all those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our Nation. And today we gather once more to salute every patriot who has ever proudly worn the uniform of the United States of America.

This year, as we mark 70 years since our victory in the Second World War, we pay special tribute to a generation that literally saved the world. We're joined by several of those heroes, including our oldest known female World War II vet, Army Lieutenant Colonel Luta C. McGrath, who this month turns 108. [*Applause*] There she is. And I would ask all of our veterans and families of World War II, if you can stand, please stand or raise your hand so America can thank you one more time.

Today, in big cities and small towns across our country, there will be ceremonies around flagpoles and parades down Main Street to properly express our gratitude, to show our appreciation to men and women who served so that we might live free. It is right that we do so. But our tributes will ring hollow if we stop there.

If tomorrow, after the parades and the ceremonies, we roll up the banners and sweep the veterans halls and go back to our daily lives, forgetting the bond between the service of our veterans and our obligations as citizens, then we will be doing a profound disservice to our veterans and to the very cause for which they served. This day is not only about gratitude for what they have done for us, it is also a reminder of all that they still have to give to our Nation and our duty to them. And that's what I want to talk about briefly today.

We're in the midst of a new wave of American veterans. In recent years, more than a million of our men and women in uniform—many of them veterans of Afghanistan and Iraq—have completed their military service and returned to civilian life. Each year, at least another 200,000 do the same. Our 9/11 generation of veterans are joining the ranks of those who have come before, including many of you, our veterans of Korea and Vietnam.

Our tributes today will ring hollow if we do not ensure that our veterans receive the care that you have earned and that you deserve. The good news is, is that in recent years, we've made historic investments to boost the VA budget, expand benefits, offer more mental health care and improved care for our wounded warriors, especially those with posttraumat-

ic stress and traumatic brain injury. We've now slashed the disability claims backlog by nearly 90 percent. We're reducing the outrage of veterans' homelessness and have helped tens of thousands of our veterans get off the streets.

Still, the unacceptable problems that we've seen—like long wait times and some veterans not getting the timely care that they need—is a challenge for all of us if we are to match our words with deeds. And my message to every single veteran, to veterans all across this country is that I am still not satisfied and Bob McDonald is still not satisfied. And we are going to keep investing in the facilities and the physicians and the staff to make sure that our veterans get the care that you need when you need it. That is our obligation, and we are not going to let up.

Our tributes today will also ring hollow if we don't provide our veterans with the jobs and opportunities that you need when you come home. That's why we've helped more than 1.5 million veterans and their families pursue an education under the post-9/11 GI bill. That's why we worked to make sure that every State now provides veterans and their families with in-State tuition. It's why we're fighting to make it easier for our veterans to get the licenses and certifications to transition the outstanding skills they gained in the Armed Services to civilian jobs. It's why we're helping more veterans and military spouses find jobs. And today, the veterans' unemployment rate is down to 3.9 percent, even lower than the national average.

But this can't just be a job for government. We all have a role to play. I realize that with less than 1 percent of Americans serving in uniform, the other 99 percent of folks don't always see and appreciate the incredible skills and assets that our veterans can offer. On this Veterans Day, here's what I want every American to know: Our veterans are some of the most talented, driven, capable people on Earth.

Think about the leadership that they've learned: twenty-somethings leading platoons into life-or-death situations; the cutting-tech—edge technologies that they've mastered; their ability to adapt to changing and unpredictable situations. They can perform under pressure. They've helped reconstruct towns and mediate disputes. They've managed large-scale projects. They've learned how to work on teams, how to stay committed to a mission, how to solve seemingly intractable problems. They get stuff done. And they are selfless. And they are brave. And they are qualified. And America needs folks who know how to get stuff done.

If you can save a life on the battlefield, you can save a life in an ambulance. If you can oversee a convoy or millions of dollars of assets in a conflict zone, you sure can help manage a company's supply chain. If you can maintain the most advanced weapons in the world, surely, you can manufacture the next generation of advanced technology right here at home.

Our veterans will tell you themselves, they may have put away their uniforms, but they're not finished serving their country. And that includes our wounded warriors who tell me that as soon as they can, they want to serve their country again. They're exactly the kind of people we need to keep America competitive in the 21st century. That's why more and more companies are hiring veterans, not out of charity, not out of patriotism or some moral obligation—although, they do have those obligations—but because they know it's good for their bottom line.

Every day, our veterans help keep America strong—every day—responding to natural disasters here at home and around the world, working to end homelessness and get more of their brothers and sisters in arms the resources they need to transition into civilian life. They're starting their own businesses, like the two veterans who started a coffee shop that's so good my own staff voted to have it served in the White House. [*Laughter*] And understand, we consume a lot of coffee in the White House. [*Laughter*] So, to my sleep-deprived staff, those guys are pretty heroic. [*Laughter*]

Our veterans are moms and dads, they're teachers and doctors, engineers and entrepreneurs, social workers and community leaders. They are serving in statehouses across the country. They're serving in Congress. We've

got a proud veteran, retired Navy Captain Scott Kelly, Commander of the International Space Station, who's up there right now, just became the American astronaut to serve the longest consecutive flight in space.

Our veterans are already making America great every single day. So my message today is simple: If you want to get the job done, hire a vet. If you're a business that needs team players who know how to lead and execute an idea, hire a vet. If you're a school system that needs dedicated, passionate teachers, hire a veteran. If you're a nonprofit that needs leaders who have been tested and can follow through on a vision, hire a veteran. Every sector, every industry, every community can benefit from the incredible talents of our veterans. They're ready to serve, and they'll make you proud.

I want to just give you one example: a young woman named Jennifer Madden. Jenn joined the Army at 17 years old. She wanted to be just like her grandpa, a Korean war veteran. Her very first day of basic training was September 11, 2001. She deployed to Afghanistan, where she pulled security details during attacks. She lost one of her close friends in combat. When she came home, she tried to get back into her old life, but she found she simply couldn't stay focused in school or at work. She was struggling to relate to her family and her friends. Soon, she was self-medicating and became homeless. Jenn felt like she had lost her mission, her sense of purpose.

But then, thanks to an organization that connects veterans with therapists who donate their time, Jenn was able to get counseling at no charge. She started dealing with her posttraumatic stress. With a lot of hard work, she started pulling her life back together. And today, Jenn and the love of her life, Josh, are raising two beautiful children. She is a licensed nurse. She works at a rehab facility helping folks who were just like her, including veterans, get back on their feet. And through Michelle and Jill Biden's Joining Forces initiative, she's an advocate for her fellow veterans.

Jenn is here today. And I want Jenn to stand if she can, because I want everybody to thank her for her courage, her example, for her telling her story. We are extraordinarily grateful. Thank you, Jenn.

And I tell Jenn's story because like all of our brave men and women in uniform, Jenn represents the best of who we are as a nation. She has sacrificed for us and sometimes has the scars seen and unseen that are part of that sacrifice. And she's an example of what's possible when we express our gratitude not just in words, not just on one day, but through deeds every day, when we open our hearts and give hope to our returning heroes and we harness your talents and your drive and when we honor your inherent sense of purpose and empower you to continue serving the country you love.

What has always made America great, what has always made us exceptional, are the patriots who, generation after generation, dedicate themselves to building a nation that is stronger, freer, a little more perfect. On this day and every day, we thank you.

God bless our veterans and your families, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:39 a.m. in the Memorial Amphitheater at Arlington National Cemetery. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., USMC; Maj. Gen. Bradley A. Becker, USA, commanding general, National Capital Region and Military District of Washington; and Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden.

Remarks on Presenting the Medal of Honor to Captain Florent A. Groberg
November 12, 2015

Please be seated. Good morning, and welcome to the White House. A little more than 3 years ago, as Captain Florent Groberg was recovering from his wounds as a consequence of the actions that we honor today, he woke up on a hospital bed, in a little bit of a haze. He

wasn't sure, but he thought he was in Germany, and someone was at his bedside talking to him. He thought it was the lead singer from the heavy metal band Korn. [*Laughter*] Flo thought: "What's going on? Am I hallucinating?" But he wasn't. It was all real.

And so today, Flo, I want to assure you, you are not hallucinating. You are actually in the White House. Those cameras are on. I am not the lead singer from Korn. [*Laughter*] We are here to award you our Nation's highest military honor—distinction: the Medal of Honor.

Now, Flo and I have actually met before. 3 years ago, I was on one of my regular visits to Walter Reed to spend some time with our wounded warriors, and Flo was one of them. We talked. It turns out he liked the Chicago Bears, so I liked him right away. [*Laughter*] And I had a chance to meet his parents who could not be more gracious and charming, and you get a sense of where Flo gets his character from. It is wonderful to see both of you again.

I also want to welcome Flo's girlfriend Carsen, who apparently, Flo tells me, he had to help paint an apartment with just the other day. So there's some honey-do lists going on. [*Laughter*] His many friends, fellow soldiers and family, all of our distinguished guests. A day after Veterans Day, we honor this American veteran, whose story, like so many of our vets and wounded warriors, speaks not only of gallantry on the battlefield, but resilience here at home.

As a teenager just up the road in Bethesda, Flo discovered he had an incredible gift: He could run. Fast. Half-mile, mile, 2 mile, he'd leave his competition in the dust. He was among the best in the State. And he went on to run track and cross country at the University of Maryland.

Flo's college coach called him "the consummate teammate." As good as he was in individual events, somehow he always found a little extra something when he was running on a relay, with a team. Distance running is really all about guts, and as one teammate said, Flo could "suffer a little more than everyone else could." So, day after day, month after month, he pushed himself to his limit. He knew that every long run, every sprint, every interval could help shave off a second or two off his times. And as he'd find out later, a few seconds can make all the difference.

Training, guts, teamwork—what made Flo a great runner also made him a great soldier. In the Army, Flo again took his training seriously—hitting the books in the classroom, paying attention to every detail in field exercises—because he knew that he had to be prepared for any scenario. He deployed to Afghanistan twice, first as a platoon leader and then a couple of years later when he was hand-picked to head up a security detail. And so it was on an August day 3 years ago that Flo found himself leading a group of American and Afghan soldiers as they escorted their commanders to a meeting with local Afghans. It was a journey that the team had done many times before, a short walk on foot, including passage over a narrow bridge.

At first, they passed pedestrians, a few cars and bicycles, even some children. But then, they began to approach the bridge, and a pair of motorcycles sped toward them from the other side. The Afghan troops shouted at the bikers to stop, and they did, ditching their bikes in the middle of the bridge and running away.

And that's when Flo noticed something to his left: a man, dressed in dark clothing, walking backwards, just some 10 feet away. The man spun around and turned toward them, and that's when Flo sprinted toward him. He pushed him away from the formation, and as he did, he noticed an object under the man's clothing: a bomb. The motorcycles had been a diversion.

And at that moment, Flo did something extraordinary. He grabbed the bomber by his vest and kept pushing him away. And all those years of training on the track, in the classroom, out in the field, all of it came together. In those few seconds, he had the instincts and the courage to do what was needed. One of Flo's comrades, Sergeant Andrew Mahoney, had joined in too, and together, they shoved the bomber again and again. And they pushed him so hard he fell to the ground onto his chest. And then, the bomb detonated.

Ball bearings, debris, dust exploded everywhere. Flo was thrown some 15 or 20 feet and was knocked unconscious. And moments later, he woke up in the middle of the road in shock. His eardrum was blown out. His leg was broken and bleeding badly. Still, he realized that if the enemy launched a secondary attack, he'd be a sitting duck. And when a comrade found him in the smoke, Flo had his pistol out, dragging his wounded body from the road.

That blast by the bridge claimed four American heroes, four heroes Flo wants us to remember today: one of his mentors, a 24-year Army vet who always found time for Flo and any other soldier who wanted to talk, Command Sergeant Major Kevin Griffin; a West Pointer who loved hockey and became a role model to cadets and troops because he always "cared more about other people than himself," Major Tom Kennedy; a popular Air Force leader known for smiling with his "whole face," someone who always seemed to run into a friend wherever he went, Major David Gray; and finally, a USAID foreign service officer who had just volunteered for a second tour in Afghanistan, a man who moved to the United States from Egypt and reveled in everything American, whether it was Disneyland or chain restaurants or roadside pie, Ragaei Abdelfattah.

These four men believed in America. They dedicated their lives to our country. They died serving it. Their families—loving wives and children, parents and siblings—bear that sacrifice most of all. So, while Ragaei's family could not be with us today, I'd ask three Gold Star families to please stand and accept our deepest thanks.

Today we honor Flo because his actions prevented an even greater catastrophe. You see, by pushing the bomber away from the formation, the explosion occurred farther from our forces and on the ground instead of in the open air. And while Flo didn't know it at the time, that explosion also caused a second, unseen bomb to detonate before it was in place. And had both bombs gone off as planned, who knows how many could have been killed.

Those are the lives Flo helped to save. And we are honored that many of them are here today: Brigadier General James Mingus; Sergeant Andrew Mahoney, who was awarded a Silver Star for joining Flo in confronting the attacker; Sergeant First Class Brian Brink, who was awarded a Bronze Star with valor for pulling Flo from the road; Specialist Daniel Balderrama, the medic who helped to save Flo's leg; Private First Class Benjamin Secor and Sergeant Eric Ochart, who also served with distinction on that day. Gentlemen, I'd ask you to please stand and accept the thanks of a grateful nation as well.

At Walter Reed, Flo began his next mission, the mission to recover. He suffered significant nerve damage, and almost half of the calf muscle in his left leg had been blown off. So the leg that had powered him around that track, the leg that moved so swiftly to counter the bomber, that leg had been through hell and back. Thanks to 33 surgeries and some of the finest medical treatment a person can ask for, Flo kept that leg. He's not running, but he's doing a lot of CrossFit. I would not challenge him to CrossFit. [*Laughter*] He's putting some hurt on some rowing machines and some stair climbers. [*Laughter*] I think it is fair to say he is fit.

Today, Flo is medically retired. But like so many of his fellow veterans of our 9/11 generation, Flo continues to serve. As I said yesterday at Arlington, that's what our veterans do. They are incredibly highly skilled, dynamic leaders always looking to write that next chapter of service to America. For Flo, that means a civilian job with the Department of Defense to help take care of our troops and keep our military strong.

And every day that he is serving, he will be wearing a bracelet on his wrist, as he is today, a bracelet that bears the names of his brothers-in-arms who gave their lives that day. The truth is, Flo says that day was the worst day of his life. And that is the stark reality behind these Medal of Honor ceremonies: that for all the valor we celebrate and all the courage that inspires us, these actions were demanded amid some of the most dreadful moments of war.

That's precisely why we honor heroes like Flo, because on his very worst day, he managed to summon his very best. That's the nature of courage: not being unafraid, but confronting fear and danger and performing in a selfless fashion. He showed his guts, he showed his training, how he would put it all on the line for his teammates. That's an American we can all be grateful for. It's why we honor Captain Florent Groberg today.

May God bless all who serve and all who have given their lives to our country. We are free because of them. May God bless their families and may God continue to bless the United States of America with heroes such as these.

[*At this point, Maj. Steven M. Schreiber, USMC, Marine Corps Aide to the President, read the citation, and the President presented the medal, assisted by Maj. Andrew C. Steadman, USA, Army Aide to the President. Following the presentation of the medal, Maj. Gen. Paul K. Hurley, USA, Army Chief of Chaplains, said a prayer.*]

That concludes the formal portion of this ceremony. I need to take some pictures with the outstanding team members, as well as the Gold Start families who are here today. As Flo reminds us, this medal, in his words, honors them as much as any honors that are bestowed upon him. And on Veterans Day week, that is particularly appropriate.

I want to thank all of our servicemembers who are here today, all who could not attend. And I hope you enjoy an outstanding reception. I hear the food is pretty good here. [*Laughter*]

Thank you very much, everybody. Give Captain Groberg a big round of applause again. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:11 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Jonathan Davis, lead singer, Korn; Klara and Larry Groberg, parents, and Carsen Zarin, girlfriend, of Capt. Groberg; and Andrew O. Valmon, head coach, and Pete Hess, former team member, University of Maryland track and field program. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the reading of the citation.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Termination of the Emergency With Respect to the Actions and Policies of Former Liberian President Charles Taylor
November 12, 2015

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Consistent with subsection 204(b) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(b), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order that terminates the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13348 of July 22, 2004, and revokes that Executive Order. I have determined that the situation that gave rise to this national emergency has been significantly altered by Liberia's advances to promote democracy and the orderly development of its political, administrative, and economic institutions.

The President issued Executive Order 13348 to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States posed by the actions and policies of former Liberian President Charles Taylor and other persons, in particular their unlawful depletion of Liberian resources and their removal from Liberia and secreting of Liberian funds and property. Executive Order 13348 helped to ensure the preservation of Liberia's resources, property, and funds and to deprive certain individuals of funding and arms for conflicts in West Africa, consistent with U.S. national security and foreign policy. Executive Order 13348 also implemented the United States asset freeze obligations under United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1532.

With the advancements in Liberia including presidential elections in 2005 and 2011, which were internationally recognized as freely held; the 2012 conviction of, and 50-year prison

sentence for, former Liberian President Charles Taylor and the affirmation on appeal of that conviction and sentence; and the diminished ability of those connected to former Liberian President Charles Taylor to undermine Liberia's progress, and the United Nations Security Council's termination of asset freeze obligations on September 2, 2015, in UNSCR 2237, there is no further need for the blocking of assets imposed by Executive Order 13348. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to terminate the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13348 and revoke that order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Paul D. Ryan, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. Executive Order 13710 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction
November 12, 2015

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice, stating that the national emergency with respect to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction that was declared in Executive Order 12938 is to continue in effect beyond November 14, 2015.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Paul D. Ryan, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks During a Meeting With National Security Leaders on the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement
November 13, 2015

Well, as many of you know, this weekend I will be leaving for my trip to the G–20, and then, from there, I'll be taking my annual trip to Asia: meetings with the ASEAN countries through the East Asia Summit. Economically, the Asia-Pacific region is the most dynamic, the most populous, and fastest growing region of the world. And strategically, it is a region that's absolutely vital to our economic and national security interests in the 21st century.

We've been working hard to increase the U.S. presence and focus in the Asia-Pacific region. We are a Pacific power. Some of our closest alliances are in this region. And we do an enormous amount of business, but there's a lot more potential business to be done. And if we're going to continue to succeed in securing our Nation and our allies, then we're going to have to be a player and help establish the economic and security architecture in that region for this century and centuries to come.

I believe—and I think that we have some of the most accomplished national security experts and military officers in our presence here

today; they believe—that our economic prosperity and our national security cannot be separated. And if we are going to be a serious player in this critical region of the world, then we've got to get the economics right, and we've got to get the national security right. That's why all of us agree that the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement that we have forged is so important and that it is critical for Congress to act.

The 12 nations that are party to this agreement represent 40 percent of the world's GDP. And our goal throughout this agreement has been to raise the standards, raise everybody's games in a way that advantages America's workers, American businesses, American farmers, American ranchers. The results of this agreement are an elimination of tariffs—taxes, effectively—on American products and American services being sold into this region. We're already largely open to them, but they often have been closed to us. We're changing that.

We're making sure that labor standards and environmental standards are observed there, just like they are here, so that we create a level playing field and they don't have the ability as effectively to undercut U.S. workers and U.S. businesses who are following higher standards by using child labor, for example, or dumping their pollution in the oceans in ways that U.S. businesses can no longer do.

We're making sure that intellectual property is protected, because a lot of what we produce has a lot of intellectual content. We're the software creators. We're the innovators. And if folks in these countries are able to just duplicate what we do and all the research and development that's gone into it, then over time our economic primacy will be eroded.

And the good news is, is that these countries recognize that America is, in fact, going to be in the region for a long time. They're the partner that—we are the partner that they want. And this agreement reflects the kinds of high standards that we've been shooting for.

The key now is for us to get this thing done. And I am honored to have the individuals sitting around this table: people like Henry Kissinger, who first opened up the U.S. relationship with China after decades of hostility; individuals like former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mike Mullen, who understands very well what our national security needs are in the Pacific; folks like Jim Baker and Colin Powell, who have served in a variety of capacities as Treasury Secretary, as Secretary of State, as—both in uniform and out of uniform—all of them saying that this is critical to get done for the U.S. economy, but it's also critical for America's national security.

And one of the things that we all agreed on, as we discussed the issue here today, is that if we fail to get the Trans-Pacific Partnership done, if we do not create the architecture for high-standards trade and commerce in this region, then that void will be filled by China, it will be filled by our economic competitors. They will make the rules, and those rules will not be to our advantage.

So the time is for us to get this done. We've now put the text out. It is available for everybody to read. We are consulting closely with members of both parties in Congress. And we strongly believe that on a bipartisan basis we should get this done. As soon as the 90-day review period is completed and the new session of Congress begins after the Christmas break, I'm hoping that leaders in both parties and both Chambers move promptly to get this done. It will be good for American business, it will be good for American workers, it will be good for our national security for generations to come. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:18 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. Participating in the meeting were former Secretaries of State Madeleine K. Albright, James A. Baker III, Henry A. Kissinger, and Colin L. Powell; former Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen; former National Security Advisers Stephen J. Hadley, James L. Jones, Jr., and Brent Scowcroft; Michael G. Mullen, former Chairman, and James A. "Sandy" Winnefeld, Jr., former Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Samuel J. Locklear III, former commander, U.S. Pacific Command. Vice President Joe

Biden, Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter, U.S. Trade Representative Michael B. Froman, White House Senior Adviser Valerie B. Jarrett, National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice, and National Economic Council Director Jeffrey D. Zients also attended.

Remarks on the Terrorist Attacks in Paris, France
November 13, 2015

Good evening, everybody. I just want to make a few brief comments about the attacks across Paris tonight. Once again, we've seen an outrageous attempt to terrorize innocent civilians. This is an attack not just on Paris, it's an attack not just on the people of France, but this is an attack on all of humanity and the universal values that we share.

We stand prepared and ready to provide whatever assistance that the Government and the people of France need to respond. France is our oldest ally. The French people have stood shoulder to shoulder with the United States time and again. And we want to be very clear that we stand together with them in the fight against terrorism and extremism.

Paris itself represents the timeless values of human progress. Those who think that they can terrorize the people of France or the values that they stand for are wrong. The American people draw strength from the French people's commitment to life, liberty, pursuit of happiness. We are reminded in this time of tragedy that the bonds of *liberté* and *égalité* and *fraternité* are not only values that the French people care so deeply about, but they are values that we share. And those values are going to endure far beyond any act of terrorism or the hateful vision of those who perpetrated the crimes this evening.

We're going to do whatever it takes to work with the French people and with nations around the world to bring these terrorists to justice and to go after any terrorist networks that go after our people.

We don't yet know all the details of what has happened. We have been in contact with French officials to communicate our deepest condolences to the families of those who have been killed, to offer our prayers and thoughts to those who have been wounded. We have offered our full support to them. The situation is still unfolding. I've chosen not to call President Hollande at this time, because my expectation is that he's very busy at the moment. I actually, by coincidence, was talking to him earlier today in preparation for the G–20 meeting. But I am confident that I'll be in direct communications with him in the next few days, and we'll be coordinating in any ways that they think are helpful in the investigation of what's happened.

This is a heartbreaking situation. And obviously, those of us here in the United States know what it's like. We've gone through these kinds of episodes ourselves. And whenever these kinds of attacks happened, we've always been able to count on the French people to stand with us. They have been an extraordinary counterterrorism partner, and we intend to be there with them in that same fashion.

I'm sure that in the days ahead, we'll learn more about exactly what happened, and my teams will make sure that we are in communication with the press to provide you accurate information. I don't want to speculate at this point in terms of who was responsible for this. It appears that there may still be live activity and dangers that are taking place as we speak. And so, until we know from French officials that the situation is under control and we have for more information about it, I don't want to speculate. Okay?

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:45 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. The related proclamation of November 15 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the Death of White House Photo Editor Rick McKay
November 13, 2015

Rick McKay had a knack for telling a good story. As a veteran photojournalist who became a trusted member of my team as White House Photo Editor, Rick dedicated his life to sharing the American story through images: moments both expected and unlikely, snapshots both of epic events and everyday kindnesses.

Last night we lost Rick to cancer. Michelle and I send our most sincere condolences to Rick's wife Carol and his children Nick and Ally. Our hearts are heavy at the White House today. But Rick's other family—his White House family—will tell our own stories, memories of Rick's kindness and humor, his passion for NASCAR, his love for his dog Kiley, and his dedication to doing the job the right way. We thank Rick for sharing his joy and optimism through the photos that will live on through history, the stories that will live on in our hearts, and most of all, for making his time here count.

Statement on Representative Samuel S. Farr's Decision Not To Seek Reelection
November 13, 2015

For more than 40 years, from his service on the Monterey County Board of Supervisors to his tenure in the U.S. House of Representatives, Sam Farr has worked tirelessly for the people of California. Sam has helped protect our oceans and our environment, remove trade barriers for Californian businesses, and promote travel and tourism throughout the United States. A proud alumnus of and advocate for the Peace Corps, Sam also has worked to improve lives in communities around the world. I look forward to continuing to work with Sam in the months ahead, and Michelle and I send him and his wife Shary our best wishes as they begin this new chapter of their lives.

Statement on Representative Rubén Hinojosa's Decision Not To Seek Reelection
November 13, 2015

For nearly two decades, Rubén Hinojosa has proudly served the people of South Texas with dedication, passion, and distinction. As chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, Rubén strengthened Latino communities in his district and across the country and fought to fix our broken immigration system. During his 10 terms in Congress, he has helped lead the fight to protect our most vulnerable families, make higher education more affordable, and expand job training programs for every American willing to work hard. I'm grateful for Rubén's tireless efforts, and I look forward to continuing to work with him throughout the remainder of his term. Michelle and I wish Rubén and his family well in whatever the future may hold.

The President's Weekly Address
November 14, 2015

Hi, everybody. This week, America came together to salute our veterans, to express our appreciation to all who served so that we might live free. But our gratitude should extend beyond what our veterans have done for us in the past. It should remind us of our responsibility to serve them as well as they have served us. It should compel us to keep our

veterans central to the ongoing work of this Nation.

In recent years, we've made historic investments to boost the VA budget, expand veterans' benefits and improve care for our wounded warriors. We've now slashed the disability claims backlog by nearly 90 percent from its peak. We're reducing the outrage of veterans' homelessness and we've helped tens of thousands of veterans get off the streets. The veterans' unemployment rate is down to 3.9 percent, even lower than the national average.

Of course, we're not satisfied. We've still got more work to do, and I've directed my administration to keep doing everything it can to fulfill our promise to our veterans. But this isn't just a job for government alone. We all have a role to play. Less than 1 percent of Americans are serving in uniform, so it's true most Americans don't always see and appreciate the incredible skills and assets that our veterans can offer. But every American should know that our veterans are some of the most talented, capable people in the world. They've mastered skills and technologies and leadership roles that are impossible to teach off the battlefield. They know how to get stuff done.

And as our veterans will tell you themselves, they're not finished serving their country. They're teachers and doctors, engineers and entrepreneurs, social workers and community leaders. They serve in Statehouses across the country and in Congress. As I tell small-business owners and CEOs on a regular basis, if you want to get the job done, hire a vet. Every sector, every industry, every community in this country can benefit from the incredible talents of our veterans.

Our troops and veterans give us their very best. That's what a soldier named Captain Florent Groberg proved. Three years ago, on patrol in Afghanistan, Flo saw a suicide bomber coming toward his unit. Without hesitating, Flo grabbed him by his vest and helped push him to the ground. When the bomb went off, Flo was badly injured, and four of his comrades were killed. But many more were saved because of Flo's sacrifice. Flo represents the very best of America, and this week, I was proud to present him with the Medal of Honor for his actions.

Veterans like Flo, they deserve our undying gratitude. They deserve the chance to keep serving the country they risked everything to defend. And so we must come together to keep giving them that chance, not just on Veterans Day, but on every single day of the year. May God bless all those who serve and all who have given their lives for our country, and may God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:45 p.m. on November 13 in the Grand Foyer at the White House for broadcast on November 14. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 13, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on November 14.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey in Antalya, Turkey
November 15, 2015

President Erdogan. Distinguished members of the press, we have just completed our meeting with my dear friend, President Barack Obama.

As you know, this G–20 summit is taking place at a very important point in time. We have all been shocked with the attacks that have taken place in Paris, which led to the death of 129 people and to more than 200 people being injured. We strongly condemn these attacks. And our summit meeting here is taking place against the backdrop of these developments—important developments taking place around the globe.

We shall of course continue to carry on with our discussions at the G–20 summit within the predetermined agenda items. However, we will make strong emphasis on the importance

of having a firm stance against international terrorism, given the situation that has been going on around the world. So we will—there will be a strong message coming out of this summit on that subject.

We are confronted with a collective terrorism activity around the world. As you know, terrorism does not recognize any religion, any race, any nation, or any country. And what we have seen taking place in France, in Paris, as well as in Ankara and in Antep and in Suruc and in Diyarbakir, all show to us that we are confronted with a collective effort that has been engaged in terrorism. And this terrorist action is not only against the people of France, it is an action against all of the people of the globe.

We will also have opportunity at this G–20 summit to discuss some other issues, such as climate change, the situation with the refugees, as well as financial and economic developments taking place in the world. I've also had an opportunity to discuss with Barack the fight that we are conducting against Daesh in Syria. And we had an opportunity to assess the steps that we will continue to take with respect to our efforts within the coalition in this respect.

As model and strategic partners, we will continue to show solidarity with each other with an understanding to work for global peace.

Thank you.

President Obama. Well, let me begin by thanking President Erdogan, the people of Turkey, and the people of this beautiful city for their hospitality at the G–20.

Traditionally, the G–20 has been a forum primarily to discuss important economic issues facing the globe. But as President Erdogan noted, the skies have been darkened by the horrific attacks that took place in Paris just a day and a half ago. As was true with the terrible attacks that took place in Ankara, the killing of innocent people based on a twisted ideology is an attack not just on France, not just on Turkey, but it's an attack on the civilized world. And as we, I'm sure, each said to President Hollande and the French people, we stand in solidarity with them in hunting down the perpetrators of this crime and bringing them to justice.

Turkey has been a strong partner with the United States and other members of the coalition in going after the activities of ISIL, or Daesh, both in Syria and Iraq. As a NATO ally, we have worked together to bring about pressure on ISIL, even as we also try to bring about a political transition inside of Syria that can relieve the suffering of so many people and eliminate the environment in which ISIL can operate.

So the discussion we had today, I think, was very helpful in helping to continue to coordinate the work that we're doing together to help to fortify the borders between Syria and Turkey that allow Daesh to operate. We discussed the progress that's been made in diplomatic talks in Vienna, led by our Foreign Ministers, and an insistence that we will redouble our efforts, working with other members of the coalition, to bring about a peaceful transition in Syria and to eliminate Daesh as a force that can create so much pain and suffering for people in Paris, in Ankara, and other parts of the globe.

We also had an opportunity to discuss the burden of refugees that Turkey has been bearing. And the United States, as the largest provider of humanitarian assistance to displaced persons and refugees, stands shoulder to shoulder with Turkey, Europe, and others in trying to help those who need help right now, even as we hope to reduce the flow of migrants because of the situation inside of Syria.

And we still had time to discuss some of the other critical issues like climate change, inclusive development and growth, and other topics that are of great importance to all the G–20 countries. And I want to once again thank President Erdogan for his leadership in what I'm confident will be a very productive and important meeting.

President Erdogan. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 11:50 a.m. in the Regnum Carya Golf and Spa Resort. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of State John F. Kerry; and Minister of Foreign Affairs Feridun Hadi Sinirlioglu of Turkey. He also

referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, also known as Daesh. President Erdogan spoke in Turkish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

The President's News Conference in Belek, Turkey
November 16, 2015

The President. Good afternoon. Let me begin by thanking President Erdogan and the people of Antalya and Turkey for their outstanding work in hosting this G–20 Summit. Antalya is beautiful. The hospitality of the Turkish people is legendary. To our Turkish friends, *çok teşekkürler.* [*Laughter*] I had been practicing that.

At the G–20, our focus was on how to get the global economy growing faster and creating more jobs for our people. And I'm pleased that we agreed that growth has to be inclusive to address the rising inequality around the world.

Given growing cyber threats, we committed to a set of norms, drafted by the United States, for how governments should conduct themselves in cyberspace, including a commitment not to engage in the cyber theft of intellectual property for commercial gain. And as we head into global climate talks, all G–20 countries have submitted our targets, and we've pledged to work together for a successful outcome in Paris.

Of course, much of our attention has focused on the heinous attacks that took place in Paris. Across the world, in the United States, American flags are at half-staff in solidarity with our French allies. We're working closely with our French partners as they pursue their investigations and track down suspects.

France is already a strong counterterrorism partner, and today we're announcing a new agreement. We're streamlining the process by which we share intelligence and operational military information with France. This will allow our personnel to pass threat information, including on ISIL, to our French partners even more quickly and more often, because we need to be doing everything we can to protect more attacks—protect against more attacks and protect our citizens.

Now, tragically, Paris is not alone. We've seen outrageous attacks by ISIL in Beirut, last month in Ankara, routinely in Iraq. Here at the G–20, our nations have sent an unmistakable message that we are united against this threat. ISIL is the face of evil. Our goal, as I've said many times, is to degrade and ultimately destroy this barbaric terrorist organization.

As I outlined this fall at the United Nations, we have a comprehensive strategy using all elements of our power: military, intelligence, economic, development, and the strength of our communities. We have always understood that this would be a long-term campaign. There will be setbacks, and there will be successes. The terrible events in Paris were obviously a terrible and sickening setback. Even as we grieve with our French friends, however, we can't lose sight that there has been progress being made.

On the military front, our coalition is intensifying our airstrikes, more than 8,000 to date. We're taking out ISIL leaders, commanders, their killers. We've seen that when we have an effective partner on the ground, ISIL can and is pushed back. So local forces in Iraq, backed by coalition airpower, recently liberated Sinjar. Iraqi forces are fighting to take back Ramadi. In Syria, ISIL has been pushed back from much of the border region with Turkey. We've stepped up our support of opposition forces who are working to cut off supply lines to ISIL's strongholds in and around Raqqa. So, in short, both in Iraq and Syria, ISIL controls less territory than it did before.

I made the point to my fellow leaders that if we want this progress to be sustained, more nations need to step up with the resources that this fight demands.

Of course, the attacks in Paris remind us that it will not be enough to defeat ISIL in Syria and Iraq alone. Here in Antalya, our nations, therefore, committed to strengthening border

controls, sharing more information, and stepping up our efforts to prevent the flow of foreign fighters in and out of Syria and Iraq. As the United States just showed in Libya, ISIL leaders will have no safe haven anywhere. And we'll continue to stand with leaders in Muslim communities, including faith leaders, who are the best voices to discredit ISIL's warped ideology.

On the humanitarian front, our nations agreed that we have to do even more, individually and collectively, to address the agony of the Syrian people. The United States is already the largest donor of humanitarian aid to the Syrian people, some $4.5 billion in aid so far. As winter approaches, we're donating additional supplies, including clothing and generators, through the United Nations. But the U.N. appeal for Syria still has less than half the funds needed. Today I'm again calling on more nations to contribute the resources that this crisis demands.

In terms of refugees, it's clear that countries like Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan, which are already bearing an extraordinary burden, cannot be expected to do so alone. At the same time, all of our countries have to ensure our security. And as President, my first priority is the safety of the American people. And that's why, even as we accept more refugees—including Syrians—we do so only after subjecting them to rigorous screening and security checks.

We also have to remember that many of these refugees are the victims of terrorism themselves. That's what they're fleeing. Slamming the door in their faces would be a betrayal of our values. Our nations can welcome refugees who are desperately seeking safety and ensure our own security. We can and must do both.

Finally, we've begun to see some modest progress on the diplomatic front, which is critical because a political solution is the only way to end the war in Syria and unite the Syrian people and the world against ISIL. The Vienna talks mark the first time that all the key countries have come together—as a result, I would add, of American leadership—and reached a common understanding. With this weekend's talks, there's a path forward: negotiations between the Syrian opposition and the Syrian regime under the auspices of the United Nations; a transition toward a more inclusive, representative Government; a new Constitution, followed by free elections; and alongside this political process, a cease-fire in the civil war, even as we continue to fight against ISIL.

Now, these are obviously ambitious goals. Hopes for diplomacy in Syria have been dashed before. There are any number of ways that this latest diplomatic push could falter. And there are still disagreements between the parties, including, most critically, over the fate of Bashar Asad, who we do not believe has a role in Syria's future because of his brutal rule. His war against the Syrian people is the primary root cause of this crisis.

What is different this time, and what gives us some degree of hope, is that, as I said, for the first time, all the major countries on all sides of the Syrian conflict agree on a process that is needed to end this war. And so, while we are very clear eyed about the very, very difficult road still head, the United States, in partnership with our coalition, is going to remain relentless on all fronts: military, humanitarian, and diplomatic. We have the right strategy, and we're going to see it through.

So, with that, I'm going to take some questions. And I will begin with Jerome Cartillier of AFP [Agence France-Presse].

The President's Strategy To Combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. One hundred and twenty-nine people were killed in Paris on Friday night.

The President. Yes.

Q. ISIL claimed responsibility for the massacre, sending the message that they could now target civilians all over the world. The equation has clearly changed. Isn't it time for your strategy to change?

The President. Well, keep in mind what we have been doing. We have a military strategy that involves putting enormous pressure on ISIL through airstrikes, that has put assistance

and training on the ground with Iraqi forces. We're now working with Syrian forces as well to squeeze ISIL, cut off their supply lines. We've been coordinating internationally to reduce their financing capabilities, the oil that they're trying to ship outside. We are taking strikes against high-value targets, including, most recently, against the individual who was on the video executing civilians who had already been captured, as well as the head of ISIL in Libya. So it's not just in Iraq and Syria.

And so, on the military front, we are continuing to accelerate what we do. As we find additional partners on the ground that are effective, we work with them more closely. I've already authorized additional special forces on the ground who are going to be able to improve that coordination.

On the counterterrorism front, keep in mind that since I came into office, we have been worried about these kinds of attacks. The vigilance that the United States Government maintains and the cooperation that we're consistently expanding with our European and other partners in going after every single terrorist network is robust and constant. And every few weeks, I meet with my entire national security team, and we go over every single threat stream that is presented, and where we have relevant information, we share it immediately with our counterparts around the world, including our European partners.

On aviation security, we have, over the last several years, been working so that at various airports sites—not just in the United States, but overseas—we are strengthening our mechanisms to screen and discover passengers who should not be boarding flights and improving the manners in which we are screening luggage that is going onboard.

And on the diplomatic front, we've been consistently working to try to get all the parties together to recognize that there is a moderate opposition inside of Syria that can form the basis for a transition government and to reach out not only to our friends, but also to the Russians and the Iranians who are on the other side of this equation to explain to them that ultimately an organization like ISIL is the greatest danger to them, as well as to us.

So there will be an intensification of the strategy that we put forward, but the strategy that we are putting forward is the strategy that ultimately is going to work. But as I said from the start, it's going to take time.

And what's been interesting is, in the aftermath of Paris, as I listen to those who suggest something else needs to be done, typically, the things they suggest need to be done are things we are already doing. The one exception is that there have been a few who have suggested that we should put large numbers of U.S. troops on the ground.

And keep in mind that we have the finest military in the world and we have the finest military minds in the world, and I've been meeting with them intensively for years now, discussing these various options, and it is not just my view, but the view of my closest military and civilian advisers that that would be a mistake, not because our military could not march into Mosul or Raqqa or Ramadi and temporarily clear out ISIL, but because we would see a repetition of what we've seen before, which is, if you do not have local populations that are committed to inclusive governance and who are pushing back against ideological extremes, that they resurface, unless we're prepared to have a permanent occupation of these countries.

And let's assume that we were to send 50,000 troops into Syria. What happens when there's a terrorist attack generated from Yemen? Do we then send more troops into there? Or Libya, perhaps? Or if there's a terrorist network that's operating anywhere else in North Africa or in Southeast Asia?

So a strategy has to be one that can be sustained. And the strategy that we're pursuing, which focuses on going after targets, limiting wherever possible the capabilities of ISIL on the ground, systematically going after their leadership, their infrastructure, strengthening Shia—or strengthening Syrian and Iraqi forces that are—and Kurdish forces that are prepared to fight them, cutting off their borders and squeezing the space in which they can operate

until ultimately we're able to defeat them—that's the strategy we're going to have to pursue.

And we will continue to generate more partners for that strategy. And there are going to be some things that we try that don't work; there will be some strategies we try that do work. And when we find strategies that work, we will double down on those. Okay?

Margaret Brennan, CBS.

Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/Al Qaida Terrorist Organization/U.S. Counterterrorism Efforts/Syria/Iraq

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. A more than year-long bombing campaign in Iraq and in Syria has failed to contain the ambition and the ability of ISIS to launch attacks in the West. Have you underestimated their abilities? And will you widen the rules of engagement for U.S. forces to take more aggressive action?

The President. No, we haven't underestimated our abilities. This is precisely why we're in Iraq as we speak, and why we're operating in Syria as we speak. And it's precisely why we have mobilized 65 countries to go after ISIL and why I hosted at the United Nations an entire discussion of counterterrorism strategies and curbing the flow of foreign fighters and why we've been putting pressure on those countries that have not been as robust as they need to in tracking the flow of foreign fighters in and out of Syria and Iraq.

And so there has been an acute awareness on the part of my administration from the start that it is possible for an organization like ISIL that has such a twisted ideology and has shown such extraordinary brutality and complete disregard for innocent lives, that they would have the capabilities to potentially strike in the West. And because thousands of fighters have flowed from the West and are European citizens—a few hundred from the United States, but far more from Europe—that when those foreign fighters returned, it posed a significant danger. And we have consistently worked with our European partners, disrupting plots in some cases. Sadly, this one was not disrupted in time.

But understand that one of the challenges we have in this situation is, is that if you have a handful of people who don't mind dying, they can kill a lot of people. That's one of the challenges of terrorism. It's not their sophistication or the particular weaponry that they possess, but it is the ideology that they carry with them and their willingness to die. And in those circumstances, tracking each individual, making sure that we are disrupting and preventing these attacks is a constant effort at vigilance and requires extraordinary coordination.

Now, part of the reason that it is important what we do in Iraq and Syria is that the narrative that ISIL developed of creating this caliphate makes it more attractive to potential recruits. So when I said that we are containing their spread in Iraq and Syria, in fact, they control less territory than they did last year. And the more we shrink that territory, the less they can pretend that they are somehow a functioning state and the more it becomes apparent that they are simply a network of killers who are brutalizing local populations. That allows us to reduce the flow of foreign fighters, which then, over time, will lessen the numbers of terrorists who can potentially carry out terrible acts like they did in Paris.

And that's what we did with Al Qaida. That doesn't mean, by the way, that Al Qaida no longer possess the capabilities of potentially striking the West. Al Qaida in the Peninsula, that operates primarily in Yemen, we know has consistently tried to target the West. And we are consistently working to disrupt those acts. But despite the fact that they have not gotten as much attention as ISIL, they still pose a danger as well.

And so our goals here consistently have to be to be aggressive and to leave no stone unturned, but also recognize, this is not conventional warfare. We play into the ISIL narrative when we act as if they're a state and we use routine military tactics that are designed to fight a state that is attacking another state. That's not what's going on here.

These are killers with fantasies of glory who are very savvy when it comes to social media and are able to infiltrate the minds of not just

Iraqis or Syrians, but disaffected individuals around the world. And when they activate those individuals, those individuals can do a lot of damage. And so we have to take the approach of being rigorous on our counterterrorism efforts and consistently improve and figure out how we can get more information, how we can infiltrate these networks, how we can reduce their operational space, even as we also try to shrink the amount of territory they control to defeat their narrative.

Ultimately, to reclaim territory from them is going to require, however, an ending of the Syrian civil war, which is why the diplomatic efforts are so important. And it's going to require an effective Iraqi effort that bridges Shia and Sunni differences, which is why our diplomatic efforts inside of Iraq are so important as well.

Jim Avila [ABC News].

U.S. Intelligence Reports Prior to the Terrorist Attacks in Paris, France/The President's Strategy To Combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. In the days and weeks before the Paris attacks, did you receive a warning in your daily intelligence briefing that an attack was imminent? If not, does that not call into question the current assessment that there is no immediate, specific, credible threat to the United States today?

And secondly, if I could ask you to address your critics who say that your reluctance to enter another Middle East war and your preference of diplomacy over using the military makes the United States weaker and emboldens our enemies.

The President. Jim, every day, we have threat streams coming through the intelligence transom. And as I said, every several weeks, we sit down with all my national security, intelligence, and military teams to discuss various threat streams that may be generated. And the concerns about potential ISIL attacks in the West have been there for over a year now, and they come through periodically. There were no specific mentions of this particular attack that would give us a sense of something that we need—that we could provide French authorities, for example, or act on ourselves.

But typically, the way the intelligence works is, there will be a threat stream that is from one source. How reliable is that source? Perhaps some signal intelligence gets picked up, it's evaluated. Some of it is extraordinarily vague and unspecific, and there's no clear timetable. Some of it may be more specific, and then folks chase down that thread to see what happens.

I am not aware of anything that was specific in the sense that would have given a premonition about a particular action in Paris that would allow for law enforcement or military actions to disrupt it.

With respect to the broader issue of my critics, to some degree, I answered the question earlier. I think that when you listen to what they actually have to say, what they're proposing, most of the time, when pressed, they describe things that we're already doing. Maybe they're not aware that we're already doing them. Some of them seem to think that if I were just more bellicose in expressing what we're doing, that that would make a difference. Because that seems to be the only thing that they're doing, is talking as if they're tough. But I haven't seen particular strategies that they would suggest that would make a real difference.

Now, there are a few exceptions. And as I said, the primary exception is those who would deploy U.S. troops on a large scale to retake territory either in Iraq or now in Syria. And at least, they have the honesty to go ahead and say that's what they would do. I just addressed why I think they're wrong. There have been some who are well meaning, and I don't doubt their sincerity when it comes to the issue of the dire humanitarian situation in Syria, who, for example, call for a no-fly zone or a safe zone of some sort.

And this is an example of the kind of issue where I will sit down with our top military and intelligence advisers, and we will painstakingly go through what does something like that look like. And typically, after we've gone through a lot of planning and a lot of discussion and really working it through, it is determined that it

would be counterproductive to take those steps, in part because ISIL does not have planes, so the attacks are on the ground. A true safe zone requires us to set up ground operations. And the bulk of the deaths that have occurred in Syria, for example, have come about not because of regime bombing, but because of on-the-ground casualties. Who would come in, who could come out of that safe zone? How would it work? Would it become a magnet for further terrorist attacks? And how many personnel would be required, and how would it end? Right? There's a whole set of questions that have to be answered there.

I guess my point is this, Jim: My only interest is to end suffering and to keep the American people safe. And if there's a good idea out there, then we're going to do it. I don't think I've shown hesitation to act—whether it's with respect to bin Laden or with respect to sending additional troops in Afghanistan or keeping them there—if it is determined that it's actually going to work.

But what we do not do—what I do not do—is to take actions either because it is going to work politically or it is going to somehow, in the abstract, make America look tough or make me look tough. And maybe part of the reason is because every few months, I go to Walter Reed, and I see a 25-year-old kid who is paralyzed or has lost his limbs, and some of those are people I've ordered into battle. And so I can't afford to play some of the political games that others may.

We'll do what's required to keep the American people safe. And I think it's entirely appropriate in a democracy to have a serious debate about these issues. If folks want to pop off and have opinions about what they think they would do, present a specific plan. If they think that somehow their advisers are better than the Chairman of my Joint Chiefs of Staff and the folks who are actually on the ground, I want to meet them. And we can have that debate. But what I'm not interested in doing is posing or pursuing some notion of American leadership or America winning or whatever other slogans are—they come up with, that has no relationship to what is actually going to work to protect the American people and to protect people in the region who are getting killed and to protect our allies and people like France. I'm too busy for that.

Jim Acosta [CNN].

The President's Strategy To Combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization

Q. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I wanted to go back to something that you said to Margaret earlier when you said that you have not underestimated ISIS's abilities. This is an organization that you once described as a JV team that evolved into a force that has now occupied territory in Iraq and Syria and is now able to use that safe haven to launch attacks in other parts of the world. How is that not underestimating their capabilities? And how is that contained, quite frankly? And I think a lot of Americans have this frustration that they see that the United States has the greatest military in the world, it has the backing of nearly every other country in the world when it comes to taking on ISIS. And I guess the question is—and if you'll forgive the language—is why can't we take out these bastards?

The President. [*Laughter*] Well, Jim, I just spent the last three questions answering that very question, so I don't know what more you want me to add. I think I've described very specifically what our strategy is, and I've described very specifically why we do not pursue some of the other strategies that have been suggested.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. The—this is not, as I said, a traditional military opponent. We can retake territory. And as long as we leave our troops there, we can hold it, but that does not solve the underlying problem of eliminating the dynamics that are producing these kinds of violent extremist groups.

And so we are going to continue to pursue the strategy that has the best chance of working, even though it does not offer the satisfaction, I guess, of a neat headline or an immediate resolution. And part of the reason, as I said, Jim, is because there are costs to the other

side. I just want to remind people—this is not an abstraction—when we send troops in, those troops get injured, they get killed. They're away from their families. Our country spends hundreds of billions of dollars. And so, given the fact that there are enormous sacrifices involved in any military action, it's best that we don't shoot first and aim later. It's important for us to get the strategy right. And the strategy that we are pursuing is the right one.

Ron Allen [NBC News].

The President's Strategy To Combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/U.S. Counterterrorism Efforts

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I think a lot of people around the world and in America are concerned because, given the strategy that you're pursuing—and it's been more than a year now—ISIS's capabilities seem to be expanding. Were you aware that they had the capability of pulling off the kind of attack that they did in Paris? Are you concerned, and do you think they have that same capability to strike in the United States?

And do you think that, given all you've learned about ISIS over the past year or so and given all the criticism about your underestimating them, do you think you really understand this enemy well enough to defeat them and to protect the homeland?

The President. All right, so this is another variation on the same question. [*Laughter*] And I guess, let me try it one last time. [*Laughter*]

The—we have been fully aware of the potential capabilities of them carrying out a terrorist attack. That's precisely why we have been mounting a very aggressive strategy to go after them. As I said before, it—when you're talking about the ability of a handful of people with not wildly sophisticated military equipment, weapons, who are willing to die, they can kill a lot of people. And preventing them from doing so is challenging for every country. And if there was a swift and quick solution to this, I assure you that not just the United States, but France and Turkey and others who have been subject to these terrorist attacks would have implemented those strategies.

There are certain advantages that the United States has in preventing these kinds of attacks. Obviously, after 9/11, we hardened the homeland, set up a whole series of additional steps to protect aviation, to apply lessons learned. We've seen much better cooperation between the FBI, State governments, local governments. There is some advantages to geography with respect to the United States.

But having said that, we've seen the possibility of terrorist attacks on our soil. There was the Boston Marathon bombers. Obviously, it did not result in the scale of death that we saw in Paris, but that was a serious attempt at killing a lot of people by two brothers and a crockpot. And it gives you some sense of, I think, the kinds of challenges that are going to be involved in this going forward.

So again, ISIL has serious capabilities. Its capabilities are not unique. They are capabilities that other terrorist organizations that we track and are paying attention to possess as well. We are going after all of them.

I—what is unique about ISIL is the degree to which it has been able to control territory that then allows them to attract additional recruits and the greater effectiveness that they have on social media and their ability to use that to not only attract recruits to fight in Syria, but also potentially to carry out attacks in the homeland and in Europe and in other parts of the world.

And so our ability to shrink the space in which they can operate, combined with a resolution to the Syria situation, which will reduce the freedom with which they feel that they can operate, and getting local forces who are able to hold and keep them out over the long term, that ultimately is going to be what's going to make a difference. And it's going to take some time, but it's not something that at any stage in this process have we not been aware needs to be done.

Q. Mr. President?

The President. Okay, go ahead.

Q. Shall I wait for the microphone? No?

The President. No, I can hear you.

Islam/Efforts Within the Muslim Community To Counter Extremism/Syrian Refugees

Q. Okay, thank you so much. [*Inaudible*] My name is—[*inaudible*]. I'd like to ask a question—[*inaudible*]. These terrorist attacks we've seen allegedly happened—have been attacks under the name of Islam. But this really takes—or upsets the peaceful people like countries like Turkey. So how can we give off that—[*inaudible*]—this is not really representative of Muslims? Thank you.

The President. Yes. Well, this is something that we spoke a lot about at the G–20. The overwhelming majority of victims of terrorism over the last several years, and certainly the overwhelming majority of victims of ISIL, are themselves Muslims. ISIL does not represent Islam. It is not representative in any way of the attitudes of the overwhelming majority of Muslims. This is something that's been emphasized by Muslim leaders, whether it's President Erdogan or the President of Indonesia or the President of Malaysia, countries that are majority Muslim, but have shown themselves to be tolerant and to work to be inclusive in their political process.

And so, to the degree that anyone would equate the terrible actions that took place in Paris with the views of Islam, those kinds of stereotypes are counterproductive. They're wrong. They will lead, I think, to greater recruitment into terrorist organizations over time if this becomes somehow defined as a Muslim problem as opposed to a terrorist problem.

Now, what is also true is, is that the most vicious terrorist organizations at the moment are ones that claim to be speaking on behalf of true Muslims. And I do think that Muslims around the world—religious leaders, political leaders, ordinary people—have to ask very serious questions about how did these extremist ideologies take root, even if it's only affecting a very small fraction of the population. It is real, and it is dangerous. And it has built up over time, and with social media, it is now accelerating.

And so I think, on the one hand, non-Muslims cannot stereotype, but I also think the Muslim community has to think about how we make sure that children are not being infected with this twisted notion that somehow they can kill innocent people and that that is justified by religion. And to some degree, that is something that has to come from within the Muslim community itself. And I think there have been times where there has not been enough push-back against extremism. There's been push-back. There are some who say, "Well, we don't believe in violence," but are not as willing to challenge some of the extremist thoughts or rationales for why Muslims feel oppressed. And I think those ideas have to be challenged.

Let me make one last point about this, and then unfortunately, I have to take a flight to Manila. I'm looking forward to seeing Manila, but I hope I can come back to Turkey when I'm not so busy.

One of the places that you're seeing this debate play itself out is on the refugee issue both in Europe and—I gather it started popping up while I was gone—back in the United States. The people who are fleeing Syria are the most harmed by terrorism, they are the most vulnerable as a consequence of civil war and strife. They are parents, they are children, they are orphans. And it is very important—and I was glad to see that this was affirmed again and again by the G–20—that we do not close our hearts to these victims of such violence and somehow start equating the issue of refugees with the issue of terrorism.

In Europe, I think people like Chancellor Merkel have taken a very courageous stance in saying it is our moral obligation, as fellow human beings, to help people who are in such vulnerable situations. And I know that it is putting enormous strains on the resources of the people of Europe. Nobody has been carrying a bigger burden than the people here in Turkey, with 2½ million refugees, and the people of Jordan and Lebanon, who are also admitting refugees. The fact that they've kept their borders open to these refugees is a signal of their belief in a common humanity.

And so we have to, each of us, do our part. And the United States has to step up and do its part. And when I hear folks say that, well, maybe we should just admit the Christians, but not

the Muslims; when I hear political leaders suggesting that there would be a religious test for which person who's fleeing from a war-torn country is admitted; when some of those folks themselves come from families who benefited from protection when they were fleeing political persecution—that's shameful. That's not American. That's not who we are. We don't have religious tests to our compassion.

When Pope Francis came to visit the United States and gave a speech before Congress, he didn't just speak about Christians who were being persecuted. He didn't call on Catholic parishes just to admit to those who were of the same religious faith. He said, protect people who are vulnerable.

And so I think it is very important for us right now—particularly those who are in leadership, particularly those who have a platform and can be heard—not to fall into that trap, not to feed that dark impulse inside of us.

I had a lot of disagreements with George W. Bush on policy, but I was very proud after 9/11 when he was adamant and clear about the fact that this is not a war on Islam. And the notion that some of those who have taken on leadership in his party would ignore all of that, that's not who we are. On this, they should follow his example. It was the right one. It was the right impulse. It's our better impulse. And whether you are European or American, the values that we are defending, the values that we're fighting against ISIL for, are precisely that we don't discriminate against people because of their faith. We don't kill people because they're different than us. That's what separates us from them. And we don't feed that kind of notion that somehow Christians and Muslims are at war.

And if we want to be successful defeating ISIL, that's a good place to start: by not promoting that kind of ideology, that kind of attitude. In the same way that the Muslim community has an obligation not to in any way excuse anti-Western or anti-Christian sentiment, we have the same obligation as Christians. And we are—it is good to remember that the United States does not have a religious test and we are a nation of many peoples of different faiths, which means that we show compassion to everybody. Those are the universal values we stand for. And that's what my administration intends to stand for.

All right? Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 4:42 p.m. in the San Marco 2 Press Briefing Room at the Hotel Riu Kaya Palazzo 5 resort. In his remarks, he referred to President Bashar al-Asad of Syria; Mohammed Emwazi, an ISIL operative known as "Jihadi John," who was killed in a U.S. airstrike in Raqqa, Syria, on November 12; Abu Nabil, an ISIL leader known as "Wissam Najm Abd Zayd al-Zubaydi," who was killed in a U.S. airstrike in Derna, Libya, on November 13; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., USMC; Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, who was convicted for his role in the Boston Marathon terrorist attacks of April 15, 2013; President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo of Indonesia; Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia; Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany; former Gov. John E. "Jeb" Bush of Florida; and Sens. R. Edward "Ted" Cruz and Marco A. Rubio.

Remarks Following a Tour of the Philippine Navy Frigate BRP *Gregorio del Pilar* in Manila, Philippines
November 17, 2015

Good afternoon, everybody. It is wonderful to be back in the Philippines. And I want to thank Secretary Gazmin, General Iriberri, Rear Admiral Alano and Melad, Captain Sibala, and the members of the Filipino Armed Forces for welcoming me here today. I want to acknowledge the American servicemembers who are here and who are part of our unbreakable alliance.

The United States has been committed to the security of this region for more than 70 years. We have a treaty obligation, an ironclad

commitment to the defense of our ally, the Philippines. You can count on the United States.

My visit here underscores our shared commitment to the security of the waters of this region and to the freedom of navigation. This watch center was built with U.S. grants. The ship that I just toured, a former U.S. Coast Guard vessel, helps the Philippines respond to disasters, perform counterterrorism missions, and patrol the South China Sea.

Today I can announce that we intend to transfer two additional ships to the Philippine Navy: a research vessel to help map its territorial waters and another U.S. Coast Guard cutter to bolster the Navy's ability to conduct long-endurance patrols. It's part of our larger plan to increase maritime security assistance to our allies and our partners across the region, $250 million over the course of 2 years. More capable navies in partnership with the United States are critical to the security of this region.

And I want to thank once again the members of the Philippine Armed Forces for their outstanding work. And, Mr. Secretary, I can tell you that after inspection, the ship looks like it's in tip-top shape. Thank you so much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:51 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of National Defense Voltaire Gazmin of the Philippines; Lt. Gen. Hernando Delfin Carmelo A. Iriberri, Chief of Staff, Philippines Armed Forces; Rear Adm. Jose Luis M. Alano, commander, Armed Forces of the Philippines–Philippine Fleet; Rear Adm. William M. Melad, deputy commandant, Philippines Coast Guard; and Capt. Vincent Sibala, commander, BRP *Gregorio del Pilar*.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Malcolm B. Turnbull of Australia in Manila

November 17, 2015

President Obama. Well, it is a wonderful opportunity for me to have a lengthy discussion with new Prime Minister Turnbull and his team. One of the things when we speak to our Australian partners is, there are very few things we disagree on, and that's not only because of what I hope to be a growing friendship between myself and the Prime Minister, but the lasting, enduring alliance that exists between our two countries. There are very few countries around the world that matches the kinds of continuous, comprehensive friendship and partnership that we maintain with Australia.

There are strong people-to-people ties, extraordinary cooperation on the security front, where Australia is the second largest contributor to the counter-ISIL coalition, an enormously helpful participant in our efforts to stabilize and provide the opportunity for the Afghan people to secure their own country.

On the economic front, we're strong trading partners, and we very much appreciate the constructive work that was done between our Trade Ministers in completing TPP, which is going to establish the kinds of high-standard rules of the road in trade and commerce in what accounts for 40 percent of the world's GDP here in the Asia-Pacific region.

We've had a chance to talk not only about the continuing need to ramp up pressure against ISIL and our collaboration in reaching out to the Muslim world and working with them to prevent radicalization and to prevent the kinds of horrific terrorist attacks that we've seen most recently in Paris, but we've also had a chance to talk about how we can reach out to our own people and Muslim communities in order to ensure that they feel fully a part of American and Australian democracy.

We had an excellent discussion around the importance of maintaining freedom of navigation and maritime rules. Since neither of us are claimants in some of the controversies that are taking place in the South China Sea, it's, I think, very important for us simply to uphold the basic principle that these issues should be

resolved by international norms and rule of law and peacefully settled. And we're hopeful that that can be accomplished.

And we had a chance to talk about our own bilateral trade and exchanges. And as part of that, I extended an invitation to the Prime Minister to visit Washington sometime soon. And he's agreed, so we're going to be able to set up a time. Unfortunately, it will probably be in the winter, and it will be a little cold. That's always a little worrisome for folks down under—[*laughter*]—but we'll try to make it as comfortable and as productive as possible.

So it's not surprising that we had an excellent meeting. This typically is how Americans and Aussies get along. And we are incredibly grateful for their friendship and their partnership, and it's one that extends regardless of party and whoever has occupied the respective seats in our countries.

So thank you.

Prime Minister Turnbull. Well, thank you.

President Obama. Thank you.

Prime Minister Turnbull. Well, thank you very much, Mr. President. We've had a very good discussion. The security challenges in the Middle East, of course, featured large in all of—in our discussion and in all of our thinking today. And it featured largely in the G–20 discussions that we both participated in in Turkey.

We are there, as the President said, as the second largest foreign contributor to the effort against—the campaign against ISIL. And we will continue, shoulder to shoulder, with the United States and our allies in the fight against this type of extremist violence, this type of terrorism.

We have a common purpose and a common strategy. And I appreciate, Mr. President, the support and the leadership you're giving, and I know that you appreciate the support that Australia is giving to that effort.

We've also discussed regional issues, and we are very much of the same mind. We are committed to the rule of law, to the rule—to ensuring that the big changes in this region occur in a peaceful manner and in accordance with international norms. That's absolutely vital for the continued peace and security of our region.

The TPP, which has been concluded, but of course now requires ratification by the various signatories, is a very big step. A key part of our Government strategy to ensure that we remain a high-wage, generous social welfare net, first world economy is trade. As I said at the G–20, the flexibility that open markets and trade gives economies, enables us better to deal with the disruptive change that we encounter in a modern global economy that is expanding, but changing at a pace that has never seen before in the history of human development. Open markets, flexible markets, agility—these are all part of the tools that enable us to continue to progress. And at the heart of all of that is innovation.

The President is more aware than most that so many of these great champions of innovation have come out of the United States and so rapidly. Indeed, it's a sobering thought that many of the big American corporations—not just American corporations, of course, but digital businesses across the world—if they were human beings, would still be at school. So some of these giants would still be at primary school, Mr. President. They'd still be in short pants. But they are—they're changing the world in which we live, and it's a very exciting one.

So we are very much of the same mind, as—not just because of the long history of close relations between Australia and America, but I think our two governments have the same agenda, one that is committed to strong defense of our national security and also promoting our economic security and our future prosperity through trade, through the rule of law, through a commitment to an orderly, international arrangement and a peaceful international order that is understood so that big changes, whether it is in terms of growth of one economy over another or in terms of the disruption of technologies, can occur in a peaceful way.

I should say that we also discussed the challenge of protecting cybersecurity. And again, we are very much of the same mind there. It is absolutely vital that this—that the domain of

the Internet, the most remarkable piece of infrastructure ever devised by mankind—and, Mr. President, as leaders of two countries committed to freedom and always a little skeptical of government, it's important to remember that the growth of the Internet has been largely affected without the involvement of government, which is why both of us—both of our countries support maintaining the current governance arrangements for the Internet so that it is largely—or is entirely governed by the Internet community, as opposed for being dictated to by governments.

So, all in all, it's been, as I think we both expected, a very productive and constructive discussion. We've had a very useful time, I think, in Turkey. And we were both shocked by the terrible attack in Paris. It was a sobering reminder of the threat that terrorism poses to us. But there was comfort in this: total solidarity and sympathy with the people of France. It was absolutely united. The leadership shown by the nations represented there was as solid as I'm sure we will see, for what we know we'll see from the leaders here at APEC. And the great leadership shown, particularly in this difficult challenge, by the leaders of the large Muslim nations there—President Widodo; our host, President Erdogan; Prime Minister Najib of Malaysia—was very welcome, indeed.

So, it was, it—we've come from a very successful meeting in Antalya, and we look forward to another very successful international meeting here in Manila.

President Obama. Good. Thank you.

Prime Minister Turnbull. Thank you.

President Obama. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:47 p.m. at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Minister for Trade and Investment Andrew J. Robb of Australia. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Prime Minister Turnbull referred to President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo of Indonesia; and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Benigno S. Aquino III of the Philippines and an Exchange With Reporters in Manila, Philippines
November 18, 2015

President Aquino. I'm honored to welcome our very good friend, President Barack Obama, and his delegation to the Philippines.

Prior to engaging in comprehensive exchanges in this week's APEC economic meeting, President Obama and I took the opportunity to meet and continue our discussions on the enduring bilateral partnership between the Philippines and the United States. We reaffirmed our treaty alliance, the strategic partnership, and the historic friendship between our countries. I'm confident that this firm foundation of broad cooperation and shared values will enable the Philippines and the United States to face the challenges of the present and those in the decades to come.

Our defense and security alliance commenced more than 60 years ago to this day. It remains a cornerstone of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific. As a treaty ally of the United States, the Philippines receives security assistance from the U.S. Government, particularly through the foreign military financing program. We recognize with the deepest appreciation the significant contribution to our efforts by the United States, contributions that help us ensure that we can ably respond to current security challenges, particularly in the area of maritime security and maritime domain awareness.

The National Coast Watch Center, completed early this year, was constructed with significant assistance from the United States. This project was first discussed during my visit to Washington, DC, in 2012, and our administration is very pleased to see it come to fruition this year.

Today President Obama and I discussed a number of avenues of cooperation. There is the Philippine Strategic Trade Management Act, which will enforce measures to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction from or within the Philippines in fulfillment of our international obligations. We look forward to its implementation upon the completion of domestic procedures.

We also exchanged views on cybersecurity threats and resolved to explore cooperation in this area, knowing full well that all countries have a stake in maintaining peace and order in cyberspace, so that principles of international law can be applied. This area of collaboration with the United States can impact positively on the capacity of the Philippine Government effectively and swiftly respond to cybersecurity threats and challenges.

President Obama and I, likewise, had the discussion of maritime security, including on the maritime disputes in the region and how international law should remain the framework for behavior of all countries and for the peaceful resolution of disputes. I take this opportunity to reiterate the Philippines' view that the freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea must be continuously upheld consistent with international law.

On the economic front, we welcome the continued strengthening of trade and investment relations between our countries. I conveyed the keen interest of the Philippines in the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and we hope that the United States, as one of our most important economic partners, can assist us in the process.

The Philippines is also proud to announce that the first Millennium Challenge Cooperation compact is nearing completion, and the Philippines has been deemed eligible for a second MCC compact. The Philippine and U.S. governments are working closely in the development of projects to be implemented under the second compact.

We discussed climate change, and our two governments are looking forward to fruitful discussions at the COP21 in Paris, which will start later this month. As a country highly vulnerable to climate and disaster risks, the Philippines underscores the importance of all countries contributing to the global effort to address the problem of climate change for the benefit of future generations.

Finally, President Obama and I reiterated the longstanding and multilayered engagement between our two peoples, and we pledged to ensure that our two countries work together not only to strengthen defense cooperation and increase mutual prosperity, but also to foster more meaningful ties between our people.

Thank you. Good day.

President Obama. Well, thank you very much, President Aquino, for your warm welcome. It is wonderful to be back in the Philippines. I have very fond memories of my state visit last year, and once again, I can feel the friendship and hospitality of the Filipino people. So *salamat*.

We're here as President Aquino and the Philippines host the APEC summit. And this is a reflection of Filipino leadership. Mr. President, I especially want to commend you for the summit's focus on growth that is inclusive and sustainable and that helps lift up small businesses and empowers more women.

Of course, the Philippines and the United States are great allies, so this is an occasion for me to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the security and defense of the Philippines. We stand shoulder to shoulder—*balikatan*. I'm grateful for my partnership with President Aquino, who's been a valuable and trusted friend to the United States.

Here in the Philippines, you're pursuing reforms and good governance. Together, we support a rule-based order in the region, which is critical to regional security and the global economy.

Our rebalance to the Asia-Pacific is rooted in our treaty alliances, including with the Philippines. Our enhanced defense cooperation agreement, when implemented, will bring our militaries even closer together. And we're especially committed to ensuring maritime security in the region, including freedom of navigation. During my visit yesterday with members of the Filipino Armed Forces, I was able to an-

nounce that we're increasing our maritime security assistance to the Philippines to record levels, including two new vessels.

We discussed the impact of China's land reclamation and construction activities on regional stability. We agree on the need for bold steps to lower tensions, including pledging to halt further reclamation, new construction, and militarization of disputed areas in the South China Sea. As President Aquino indicated, disputes need to be resolved peacefully. That's why the United States supports the Philippines' decisions to use arbitration under the U.N. Convention of the Law of the Sea to peacefully and lawfully address differences.

We also had a chance to discuss the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which is a pillar of America's rebalance in the region. We welcome the Philippines' interest in TPP. And we've directed our Trade Ministers to have discussions about how TPP is going to be implemented among the original 12 countries and how we can work with the Philippines to follow through on their interest. TPP is designed to be an open and inclusive trade pact for countries that can meet its high standards.

And finally, we discussed the urgent challenge of climate change, a threat to which the Philippines is especially vulnerable. I appreciate the contribution that President Aquino has made in climate talks over the last year. The Philippines has recognized the importance of a global agreement for the future of this country and the world, and we look forward to a successful outcome in Paris.

So again, Mr. President, thank you so much for your welcome and your leadership of the APEC summit. And thank you to the Filipino people for their friendship and hospitality.

Moderator. President Obama and President Aquino will now take questions from the media. For the Philippine media, may I call on Ms. Joyce Panares from the Standard?

Philippines-China Maritime Dispute/Philippines-U.S. Defense Cooperation

Q. For both Presidents, please. Since the U.S. is supportive of the Philippine arbitration, did you have a chance to discuss whether other claimants should also take that track? And also, with the EDCA pending before the Supreme Court, what role can the Philippines play in the pivot—in the Asian pivot of the United States?

President Aquino. Well, on the first part of the question, we have—we didn't discuss getting other claimants to join us in arbitration with America. But we have been discussing with some of the other claimants who have been asking us our experience and the studies we have done leading us to the arbitration move. I think you just pan—if you look at a search of previous statements with other claimant countries indicative of—they were watching us closely in this arbitration battle and are very close to a decision whether or not to join us in arbitration.

And the role of the Philippines in the pivot, well, we are one of the oldest allies of America in the region. There is the longstanding treaty, the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1951. And the enhanced defense cooperation agreement seeks to make the operation—operationalization of both forces that much more real, because we will really have—on the Philippines' part, we will have access to the most modern technology that will bring us into higher capabilities. And that's how we welcome—why we welcome—well, very open arms this agreement pending before our Supreme Court.

Now, as America gets the use of our bases to be able to have more stability in its ability to project its own power within the region in an effort to help in the stability and the orderliness and the diffusion of the tension within the region.

Thank you.

President Obama. As I've stated earlier, we're not claimants ourselves, but we fully support a process in which, through international law and international norms, these issues are resolved. And we look forward to working with all parties to move disputes through these channels.

With respect to the enhanced defense cooperation agreement, obviously the Philippines has to go through its process and the Supreme Court review. But we're confident that it's going to get done and we're going to be able to

implement effectively the provisions and the ideas that have come forward during the course of these discussions.

The broader point is, is that as a treaty ally we have a rock-solid commitment to the defense of the Philippines. And part of our goal is to continue to help our treaty partners build up capacity, to make sure that the architecture of both defense work, but also humanitarian work and other important activities in the region, are coordinated more effectively. And we think that the enhanced defense cooperation agreement is going to help us do that. Okay?

Moderator. Press Secretary Josh Earnest.

White House Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest. The next question will come from Kathleen Hennessey from the Associated Press.

Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement/Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/Russia-U.S. Cooperation in Syria/Syrian Refugees/2016 Presidential Election

Q. Excuse me. Thanks very much for doing this. First, to President Obama. You're under increasing pressure to coordinate on the anti-ISIL campaign, perhaps with Moscow. President Hollande is pushing for a more unified response. I'm wondering if you're ready to start coordinating with Vladimir Putin in a more—in a deeper way, if you feel like you trust him and can trust him on this at this point and if that more coordinated response might involve supporting France's invoking of article 5 of the NATO treaty.

And then also to—actually, I have one related question on that.

President Obama. It's all right. Go ahead.

Q. If you also wanted to comment at all on some of the discussion back at home about allowing Syrian refugees into the U.S.

President Obama. Good.

Q. There have been some lawmakers talking about closing——

President Obama. Yes, I've got some comments on that.

Q. Yes, I thought you might.

And, President Aquino, as you look at joining—considering joining the TPP down the road, I'm wondering if it gives you any pause that the President is facing some serious opposition to the deal back at home, particularly from the leading Democratic candidate to replace him. Thank you.

President Obama. Okay. I'm going to comment on all three though. [*Laughter*] There is not a trade deal that has been done in modern American politics that's not occasionally challenging, but we get it done. And I'm confident we're going to be able to get it done. So I just want to stick my two cents in on that one.

With respect to the activities of France, Moscow, and our coalition, from the start, our goal has been to unify the entire world around a concerted effort against ISIL. And that's why we lead a 65-nation coalition that has been systematically going after ISIL on the ground, but also trying to cut off their financing, cut off their oil exports, identify high-value targets.

And as I indicated in Turkey during my press conference, we continue to examine what's working well, what's not working as well. We adjust strategy in accordance with what we're seeing on the ground and continually encouraging other countries to do more.

So, obviously, in light of what happened in Paris, I think President Hollande wants to step up and be more involved in the work that we have been doing. He was already an excellent partner, and I welcome the fact that they're now willing to step up some of the strikes that they've been taking in Syria. And in fact, we're obviously helping to facilitate them doing so. There's been very close coordination from the start between Paris and the United States in the French response.

With respect to Moscow, from the start, I've also welcomed Moscow going after ISIL. The problem has been that in their initial military incursion into Syria, they've been more focused on propping up Mr. Asad and targeting the moderate opposition, as opposed to targeting those folks who threaten us, Europe, and Russia as well. And I've had repeated discussions—first in New York at the United Nations General Assembly and then most recently in Turkey—with President Putin that if in fact he shifts his focus and the focus of his military to what is the principal threat, which is ISIL, then

that is something that we very much want to see.

That's not how they've been operating over the last several weeks. It may be that now, having seen ISIL take down one of their airliners in a horrific accident, that that reorientation continues. And we'll be in discussions with Moscow and Mr. Putin to see if that will continue.

We can't separate that out from the broader issue of how do we settle the war in Syria. And for the last several weeks, Russia has been a constructive partner in Vienna in trying to create a political transition. There is obviously a catch, which is, Moscow still is interested in keeping Asad in power; we do not believe that we can arrive at a political settlement so long as he remains President. But those differences have not prevented us from looking at how can we set up a cease-fire, how can we move forward on setting up a political transition period that could lead to new elections. And we will continue to work with not just Russia, but all the parties in the region, to see if we can arrive at a political solution.

If we get a better understanding with Russia about the process for bringing an end to the Syrian civil war, that obviously opens up more opportunities for coordination with respect to ISIL. And so the two things can't be completely separated. But we're going to wait and see whether in fact Russia does end up devoting more attention to targets that are ISIL targets. And if it does so, then that's something we welcome. That's exactly what I've been arguing for since we set up this anti-ISIL coalition. And that's what I've been arguing to all our coalition partners and those who have not been in the coalition over the last several years.

With respect to the refugee debate that's been taking place, I gather, while we've been gone, what happened in Paris is terrible. And because you have this vibrant, modern, open, diverse, tolerant Western city that reminds us of home, that reminds us of our own cafes and our own parks and our own stadiums, I understand why the American people have been particularly affected by the gruesome images that have happened there.

And it is important for us to be reminded that we have to be vigilant, that rooting out these terrorist networks and protecting the homeland is hard work, and we can't be complacent or lulled into thinking somehow that we are immune from these kinds of attacks. That's why we built an entire infrastructure over the last decade-plus to make it much harder for terrorists to attack us, to go after terrorists where they live and plan these attacks, to coordinate with our partners and our allies, to improve our intelligence. All the work that we've been doing in our intelligence communities and our military over the last decade is in recognition of the fact that this is something we should be concerned about and we've got to work hard to prevent it.

But we are not well served when, in response to a terrorist attack, we descend into fear and panic. We don't make good decisions if it's based on hysteria or an exaggeration of risks. And I think the refugee debate is an example of us not being well served by some of the commentary that's been taking place by officials back home and in the media.

Understand, under current law, it takes anywhere from, on average, 18 to 24 months to clear a refugee to come into the United States. They are subjected to the most rigorous process conceivable. The intelligence community vets fully who they are. Biometrics are applied to determine whether they are, in fact, somebody who might threaten the United States. There is an entire apparatus of all of our law enforcement agencies and the center that we use for countering terrorism to check and ensure that a refugee is not admitted that might cause us harm.

And if anything, over the last several years that the refugee crisis has emerged in Europe, we've been criticized that it is too—so cumbersome that it's very difficult for us to show the kind of compassion that we need to for these folks who are suffering under the bombings of Asad and the attacks of ISIL. They're victims of this terrorism.

And so, if there are concrete, actual suggestions to enhance this extraordinary screening process that's already in place, we're welcome—

we're open to hearing actual ideas. But that's not really what's been going on in this debate. When candidates say we wouldn't admit 3-year-old orphans, that's political posturing. When individuals say that we should have a religious test and that only Christians—proven Christians—should be admitted, that's offensive and contrary to American values.

I cannot think of a more potent recruitment tool for ISIL than some of the rhetoric that's been coming out of here during the course of this debate. ISIL seeks to exploit the idea that there is a war between Islam and the West. And when you start seeing individuals in positions of responsibility, suggesting that Christians are more worthy of protection than Muslims are in a war-torn land, that feeds the ISIL narrative. It's counterproductive, and it needs to stop.

And I would add, by the way, these are the same folks oftentimes who suggest that they're so tough that just talking to Putin or staring down ISIL or using some additional rhetoric somehow is going to solve the problems out there. But apparently, they're scared of widows and orphans coming into the United States of America as part of our tradition of compassion. First, they were worried about the press being too tough on them during debates. Now they're worried about 3-year-old orphans. That doesn't sound very tough to me.

So I—if there are specific suggestions about what it is that is not already being done under this rigorous 18- to 24-month process to admit refugees and the screening that's taking place by an entire set of U.S. agencies that are specialists in countering terrorism, if they've got a specific suggestion, then they can make it. But that's not really what's been going on.

They've been playing on fear in order to try to score political points or to advance their campaigns. And it's irresponsible. And it's contrary to who we are. And it needs to stop, because the world is watching.

I was proud when there were—the attacks in Boston took place and we did not resort to fear and to panic. Boston Strong. People went to the ballgame that same week and sang the national anthem and went back to the stores and went back to the streets. That's how you defeat ISIL. Not by trying to divide the country or suggest somehow that our tradition of compassion should stop now.

All right. Oh, one last thing: With respect to Congress, I know that there's been discussion about legislation suddenly surfacing around refugees. I've been waiting for a year and a half, or more, for legislation that would authorize the military activities that we're carrying out in Syria as we speak and have not been able to get anything out of Congress. And now, suddenly, they're able to rush in, in a day or two, to solve the threat of widows and orphans and others who are fleeing a war-torn land, and that's their most constructive contribution to the effort against ISIL? That doesn't sound right to me. And I suspect it won't sound right to the American people.

Sorry, Mr. President, I had a lot to say on that one.

President Aquino. No problem. [*Laughter*] Very educational, Mr. President. [*Laughter*]

With regards to trade, we have a political system that is very similar to that that exists in the United States of America. We are both facing elections come next year. We recognize the pressure to make populist statements at this point in time. At the end of the election period, there will be sobriety, and the argument that not opening ourselves up to a bigger market and freer access to that bigger market cannot be made. Therefore, we think that once elections are over, that current voice will die down, and there will be new champions of increased free trade amongst all countries.

President Obama. President Aquino is more succinct. [*Laughter*] All right. Good? That's it. Thank you.

Moderator. Thank you, President Obama. Thank you, President Aquino. And thank you members of the press. This press conference is now concluded.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 9:19 a.m. at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Trade and Industry Gregory Domingo of the Philippines; President Bashar al-Asad of

Syria; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; Gov. Christopher J. Christie of New Jersey; Sen. R. Edward "Ted" Cruz; and former Gov. John E. "Jeb" Bush of Florida. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. A reporter referred to former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Remarks During a Panel Discussion at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation CEO Summit in Manila

November 18, 2015

The President. Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. Well, good morning.

Audience members. Good morning.

The President. I understand that Jack set the place on fire this morning already with his remarks—[*laughter*]—so he's a hard act to follow. And I'm going to keep my remarks brief because, unlike some previous APEC CEO summits where I've just made a speech, we've got an opportunity, I think, to hear from a couple of outstanding individuals. I want to thank Jack, as well as Aisa Mijeno, for joining us. And you'll find out more about Aisa—you probably know about Jack—but she's outstanding and, I think, an example of why I feel extraordinarily optimistic about our future.

It is wonderful to be back in the Philippines. We appreciate President Aquino and the Filipino people for their warm welcome and for their leadership in hosting this year's APEC summit. So, to our Filipino hosts, *salamat po.*

This is my fifth opportunity to be with you at the APEC CEO summit. I'm halfway through an around-the-world trip to Turkey, the Philippines, and Malaysia. I am crossing every time zone. [*Laughter*] And at each stop, we're working to boost economic growth that's inclusive, that benefits all people. In Antalya, the G–20 nations committed to take specific steps to boost growth, including investments in areas like infrastructure and small-business development. Here at APEC, we're working to deepen our economic cooperation in a way that is sustainable for our communities. And in Kuala Lumpur, I'll discuss one of the most important steps we can take to grow our economies, and that's the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Now, as business leaders in the Asia-Pacific, you have a great stake in each of these issues. But the topic that I want to focus on today could have a greater—even greater impact, not just on your companies, but on every country in this region and around the globe. And I'm talking about the urgent and growing threat of climate change. A challenge, but also, I would argue, an opportunity.

No nation is immune to the consequences of a changing climate. But with its many low-lying islands, its coastal regions that are vulnerable to flooding and land loss, few regions have more at stake in meeting this challenge than the Asia-Pacific region. Now, last year, in fact, the island nation of Kiribati was purchased—or purchased a plot of land in case its people, future climate change refugees, need to seek safety from the rising sea. And here in the Philippines, you're barely removed by about 2 years from Super Typhoon Haiyan, a storm that claimed thousands of lives and cost billions of dollars in damage.

We know that no single weather event is necessarily caused by climate change alone. But the patterns and the science don't lie: Temperatures and sea levels are rising; ice caps are melting; storms are strengthening. If we want to prevent the worst effects of climate change before it's too late, the time to act is now. And it is going to affect people's bottom lines. Agricultural production will be impacted if we do not get on top of this. Economic disruptions, we will be able to price the costs in serious ways. Already, insurance companies are factoring it into their determinations.

And that's why, in Paris, just 2 weeks from now, we have to come together around an ambitious framework to protect the one planet that we have while we still can. Now, the good news is, already more than 160 countries

representing about 90 percent of global emissions have put forward climate targets for post-2020. But we've got a lot more work to do. And nevertheless, I'm optimistic that we can get an outcome that we're all proud of, because we understand what's at stake.

An ambitious agreement in Paris will prompt investors to invest in clean energy technologies because they will understand that the world is committed to a low-carbon future. That's a signal to the private sector to go all-in on renewable energy technologies. And if we can get an agreement done, it could drive new jobs and new opportunities and investment in a global economy that, frankly, needs a boost right now.

One of the topics of discussion in the G–20 was where can we generate sufficient demand. The United States economy is doing relatively well, but we are impacted by weakening demand around the world. China is undergoing a necessary transition in its economy, but it means that its growth rates will not be necessarily as fast. A lot of other emerging markets have seen slow growth or, in some cases, like Brazil, contraction. And as a consequence, the possibility for us to start investing in clean energy, power generation that is sustainable, leap-frogging old technologies and getting into new technologies all could provide an enormous boost. And there is a lot of capital out there looking to invest. And if we send a signal that this is something that every nation around the world is serious about, it can be an enormous generator of opportunity.

So the United States is leading on this issue. Since I took office, we've doubled the distance new cars will go on a gallon of gas by 2025. We're producing three times as much wind power as we were when I came into office. And we are producing about 20 times as much solar power as when I came into office. Thanks in part to the investments we've made, there are already parts of America where clean power from wind or sun is actually cheaper than dirtier, conventional power. Since 2005, even as our economy is growing, America has cut our total carbon pollution by more than any other country on Earth.

And other nations are stepping up as well. Last year, renewable energy accounted for more than half of all new power plants built around the world. For the first time, China has pledged to peak, and then reduce, its carbon emissions. Here in the Philippines, you're boosting wind power. APEC is working to double renewable energy and reduce energy intensity by 45 percent over the next two decades. And through the Green Climate Fund and other avenues, the international community is helping to develop—helping developing nations to adapt to climate change and, as I said, leap-frog over the dirtier phases of development.

One of the things we tried to emphasize in Antalya and what we're emphasizing throughout this climate discussion is there is not a contradiction between growth, development, and being good stewards of the planet. They are complementary. And we have to break out of the mindset that says that if we're doing something about climate change, that slows growth. We have to accelerate it.

And the fact that President Xi and I, when we met, were able to put forward an accord as the two largest emitters sends, I think, a pretty strong signal to other countries that we see this not just as a challenge, but as an opportunity as well.

Now, the problem is, governments can't do it by themselves. The good news is, is that more and more companies are realizing that climate change presents a huge business opportunity. And we see this in America. Google, Apple, Costco are among the world's largest corporate buyers of renewable energy. Walmart has installed more onsite solar capacity than any business in America. Last month, I announced that 81 companies have joined our American Business Act on Climate Pledge, and more pledges are coming in every day. And these companies committed a total of at least $160 billion in areas like clean energy, combating deforestation, reducing emissions and water usage. And this progress is not limited to big businesses. You've got small businesses and folks up and down the supply chain who are investing in energy efficiency and clean energy

too. And oftentimes, they're finding that they're saving money while operating in a cleaner way.

We're seeing great examples across Asia as well. The private sector is getting involved in renewable energy in countries like Vietnam. Right here in the Philippines, we're seeing major investments in a massive wind and solar project.

So my message to you today is, is that your businesses can do right by your bottom lines and by our planet and future generations. The old rules that said we couldn't grow our economies and protect our environment at the same time, those are outdated. We can transition to clean energy without squeezing businesses and consumers. When we doubled fuel efficiency standards on cars, that's money in people's pockets because they're spending less money at the gas station. And that's true across our economy.

And this is the way that the world is headed. It's going to go in fits and starts. There will be some countries and some sectors that resist. But it is inexorable, it is inevitable that we move in this direction. And I hope that the companies that are represented here see this is as an opportunity. Innovators are coming up with new ideas every single day, which brings me to my two partners here for this panel, Jack Ma and Aisa Mijeno. Aisa is an entrepreneur here in the Philippines who launched a startup around a brilliant idea, which is selling lamps that run on nothing more than saltwater. We're going to—she's an engineer. She'll have to explain the physics around this thing. [*Laughter*] And I guess you've heard of Jack. [*Laughter*] But he's not just the founder of Alibaba, a giant in e-commerce, he also happens to be a leader on environmental issues like clean water and climate change.

And part of what we thought would be useful was to have a young, new entrepreneur, a young-at-heart, but not as young, large entrepreneur—[*laughter*]—compare notes about why they see this as an opportunity, why they think that it's good business sense as well as good environmental sense, and how we collectively can be more supportive and encouraging of the kind of innovation that they represent.

So, with that, we'll begin our discussion. Thank you.

So let me start with you, Jack. Is the mike on? [*Laughter*] Yes? All right. The—Jack, I know you've been passionate about the need to—something is going on here. [*Laughter*] Huh? Is it working?

Audience members. Yes.

Climate Change

The President. Okay. I know you've been passionate about the need to fight climate change. I want to get a sense from you of why you think it's so important. I also want to get a sense of why you think it's so important that business has a role in this process. And I know that in addition to the work that you've been doing with nonprofits recently, you've also been in conversations with Bill Gates about the potential of really turbocharging investment and research and development about—or around clean energy. And we may be able to make some announcements about, sort of, this mission innovation in Paris. Give me a sense of how it looks to you from the vantage point of one of the most successful and largest organizations in history.

Alibaba Group Holding Limited Executive Chairman and Founder Jack Ma. Thank you, President. Well, it's not the passion, it's the concern, the worry. I—when I was 12 years old, I went to swim in a lake, and I almost died in that lake because the water was too deep, much deeper than I thought. About 5 years ago, I went to that lake again; there was—the total lake was dry.

A lot of people have disease. And the second concern I have of young colleagues died of cancer. Twenty years ago, very few people have heard about the cancer, the word. But now almost—most of the families, my friends, they have people have cancers. So, if—we've been working so hard. If we work so hard and put all the money in the hospital, buy medicine—it will be disaster. Why we should working? So, if without a healthy environment of this Earth, no matter how much money you

make, no matter how wonderful you are, you have a bad disaster. So it's the concern that we have.

So we started 6 years ago and put 0.3 percent of the money—of the total Alibaba revenue—of encouraging, enable all the young people to find creative ways to solve the problem. And I think the money is not—always not enough, but the money we use try to wake up people's consciousness. Should know that the climate change problem; they should know—they should agree that the water is a problem, the food is a problem. So that is what we think.

And after we're doing that, we think, because what Alibaba believes is where is the opportunity? The opportunity always lies the place where people worry. If you solve the worry problem, that's the greatest opportunity you have. So, after 5 years, we find—this is a huge chance. So, as you said, 2 weeks ago, Bill Gates called me, about inviting me join the force together, investing in the clean technology. I think it's a fantastic idea, and I think to me and the company—believe this is something we can do to contribution.

As you say, we are not big company. Compared to 50 years ago, we are big. But compared to 50 years later, we are small. But if we do not care about this Earth, we do not care about the water, food, environment, I think nobody can survive whether you're big or small. So this is the concern. This is the worry I have.

Alternative and Renewable Energy Sources and Technologies/Climate Change

The President. Excellent. The—now, you mentioned the need for continuous innovation in this area, and that's why we have Aisa here. And Jack remembers when he was starting a company; Aisa is sort of at that early stage. But as an engineer by training, you had an idea that could both do well and do good. So tell us a little bit about what your idea was. Tell us about SALt and what lessons have you learned as a young entrepreneur in terms of making an impact.

SALt Cofounder and Chief Executive Officer Aisa Mijeno. Okay, so first of all, let me take this opportunity to express my deepest appreciation for allowing me to sit with you Mr. President, Mr. Ma, to share our advocacy and mission with SALt and of course, that and a more serious matter, like climate change. It's really, truly very—an honor.

So my brother and I founded SALt, so it's SAL—sustainable alternative lighting. And our main advocacy is, we wanted to address the light inequality gap first in the Philippines by focusing on the people at the bottom of the pyramid, because it comprises of about 15 to 20 percent of the country's population.

Now, most of these families live on islands—island communities—and they are not connected to power grids, so they maybe use kerosene and fuel-based lamps as the main source of lighting. And we know the danger that kerosene lamps poses. It can cause fire accidents; it releases black carbon. So that's the main reason why. What we want is, we wanted to provide these people a lighting option that is more cost-effective, more safe, more sustainable and environmentally friendly by a way of a lantern that uses saline solution or ocean water as a means to—a catalyst to generate electricity. In theory, we will be able to power up LED and of course, power up a USB port where you can also charge low-power mobile devices like your phones. Very essential during emergencies, especially disaster scenarios.

So that's how we're trying to, of course, contribute in terms of the climate change. We are starting with the lamp. And what we see— the huge impact that we'll be able to contribute is when we try or when we dive into developing, like, a large scale for the technology that we have. Just imagine if you will be able to power up a whole island using the ocean water. So our planet is composed of 70-percent salt water, so that's what we're trying to aim for.

The President. That's great. So the—now, just to be clear, the—Aisa, so with some salt water, the device that you've set up can provide—am I right?—about 8 hours of lighting?

Ms. Mijeno. Yes, 8 hours of lighting. And all you need to do is you just have to replenish the saltwater solution, and then you have another 8 hours of operating light time.

The President. And the lamp is $20?

Ms. Mijeno. Around $20.

The President. Around $20. And it will last you for?

Ms. Mijeno. There's a consumable inside that you have to change every now and then, so the main explanation, the main science behind the lamp is it's a chemical reaction.

The President. Right.

Ms. Mijeno. You're trying to convert the chemical reaction into energy.

The President. Right.

Ms. Mijeno. So there's something inside that you have to change, but you only have to change that like 6 months, if you're using the lamp 8 hours a day, every day. And that only costs the consumable part around $3—$2, $3. So you're just going to sustain the lamp, you just have to spend, like, $6 annually. And it's——

The President. Which means that you potentially save even within a certain amount of time; you're already saving enough on kerosene to have paid for the lamp. And then, from that for—point forward, basically, you're getting a modest amount, but an important amount of electricity——

Ms. Mijeno. Yes.

The President. ——that you can use for a wide variety of purposes.

Ms. Mijeno. Yes.

Entrepreneurship

The President. So I think Aisa is a perfect example of what we're seeing in a lot of countries—young entrepreneurs coming up with leapfrog technologies—in the same way that in large part—portions of Asia and Africa, the old landline phones never got set up. People just went straight to mobile. And obviously, they're buying stuff through Alibaba all there—on there all the time. [*Laughter*]

But the point is, is that they did not have to make some of the massive infrastructure investments. This is part of the reason why the old idea of development and environmental sustainability, I think, is outdated. It does raise the issue, though, of how we can do more to support young entrepreneurs like Aisa.

And, Jack, you have the benefit of having been on both sides of the equation: early entrepreneur, scratching and clawing to get things done, and then, now obviously a very successful businessman. How can both government and larger companies be assisting in creating the kind of climate for innovation that encourages young entrepreneurs like Aisa?

Mr. Ma. Yes, government is simple: just reduce the tax so no tax for these guys. [*Laughter*]

The President. The—there you go.

Mr. Ma. Well——

The President. You got a lot of cheers from your fellow CEOs. The—[*laughter*].

Mr. Ma. Yes, but I think I feel so excited by hearing this story. A startup for entrepreneur is like a baby, and I have five babies so far—experienced father.

The President. Do you love them all equally or is there—[*laughter*]—do you have some favorites? You shouldn't say that.

Mr. Ma. Yes. I do—you know, Alibaba, Alipay, Taobao—these are the—these are kids that I have. But one thing might I advise—we just had a discussion in the back office—that nobody can help you, we can only help ourselves. Investors, government, and partners, they are uncles and aunties. You are the father, you are the mother of the kid. Don't give up the kid. If you—because when we start up talking about our kid, our passion, this all sounds crazy, but you are the guy take care of the kids.

But what we do is that we are platform. Our job is to enable. We sell—on eleven-eleven day, we sold $14.5 billion, and this year, we've got, like, $500 billion sales totally on platform. We do not sell anything. We empower others people to sell. So our platform is to empower the small business to realize their dreams.

Company like that—we have a company that is—they have APP, helping trucks. Because the truck logistic, they normally deliver things from this city to that city, fully packed, but when come back, all empty. So the applications tried to making sure all the truck drivers can find the resources. So our technology and platform tried to empower this company. And last year alone, they saved 1.5 billion U.S. dollars fuel, because of the thing. So I think using the technology in innovative ways is—and other things, big companies—it's difficult for big

companies to keep the innovation, keep up. The innovation is always outside your company. So, for us, when we see companies like that, we're excited, we put the money inside, we're using technology. And we also promote them on our platform if they're environmentally friendly.

Entrepreneurship

The President. Excellent.

Mr. Ma. Yes.

The President. Aisa, what have been the biggest challenges for you in terms of scaling up? You've got a technology. You feel confident that it can work. She's won, by the way, a lot of prizes and gotten a lot of attention. So we—this is not like one of those infomercials where—[*laughter*]—you know, you order it, and you can't make the thing work. It's—[*laughter*].

So—but what have been the biggest challenges? And how could both the public sector and the private sector be more helpful in terms of encouraging young entrepreneurs like you?

Ms. Mijeno. Well, based on our experience, I guess what we need here is, like, a support system. Because we have the passion. So, if you don't mind me telling you the backstory of how we started.

The main inspiration of coming up with the application, the lighting application, was when I did a personal immersion up in the mountains of Kalinga. So there, I learned of a story that because of scarcity of public transportation, people had to travel down the mountain and walk 6 hours just to get kerosene for the lamps. And they do that every other day.

So we have the passion. So what we need is, like, a support system both from the private sector and the government to, like, mentor us, guide us how we can scale up the product—or the project. And yes, we also need a lot of support in terms of funding. So that's where—that's our main challenge right now. We're in a critical phase. We're trying to mass-produce the lamp. So we're just looking for someone to fund us to get the project moving.

[*At this point, the President pointed toward Mr. Ma.*]

Alternative and Renewable Energy Sources and Technologies/Research and Development/Environmental Conservation

The President. I'm just saying—[*laughter*]. The—serving as a matchmaker here a little bit. [*Laughter*] But a couple of things that I—and I know we—we're running out of time, but I just want to comment on.

First of all, I do think that there's a role to play for government in providing tax incentives for the production of clean energy. What's been interesting: If you look at solar, for example, heavy subsidies on the front end, but because of the trend lines in reducing the costs per BTU coming out over the last several years, it's exceeded many of our expectations. And increasingly, the subsidies become less and less necessary. So, early phase, you may need some support. Over time, less support.

A second area, Jack, where I do think that the Government has an important role to play—and I think you wouldn't disagree with this—is on basic research and development.

Mr. Ma. Yes, fundamental.

The President. Most of your businesses—of the people in this audience—you have an R&D budget, but oftentimes, it's commercializing a technology that's relatively proven, tweaking it. Where governments can do what it's hard for companies to do is to—that front-end basic research that doesn't have necessarily an immediate payoff, but will then serve as the laboratories for young people like Aisa to discover—based on that basic research, I've got a new idea, and I can do something else. And that's, in fact, how the Internet came about, in part was a combination of incredible innovation, but also some basic Government funding that had come in on the front end.

But the thing that I maybe want to ask you, Jack, sort of in closing, is whether you think that other businesses that you're interacting with and dealing with, particularly in the APEC countries feel the same urgency that you do. Or do you think that you're still an ear-

ly evangelist for this and you have to persuade others a little bit more?

And the reason I say that is because I think it's—China is an interesting example. Like the earlier patterns of England or the United States, when a country is growing rapidly, it doesn't pay a lot of attention to the environment. As it enters into, sort of, middle-income status, suddenly, people start looking at cancer rates. They start looking at the air, the water, and you become more conscious that that's a good, a value that we have to price and care about. And I'm wondering whether you think your fellow business leaders are seeing that same kind of transition and opportunity in this region.

Mr. Ma. Yes. I think—take China, for example. I think today, because of the air in Beijing, the smoggy, it caused attention, and government and all the business changed a lot in past 4 years. I just came back from Beijing 3 weeks ago. My throat was pained. And I think we organized called the Paradise Foundation. I—we invited 45—I invited 45 business leaders in China—all joined, all put the money inside. And we think that there are a lot of things business should do.

It's too late to complain whose fault. Whether your fault or my fault, let's solve the problem together. It's the combination—we're combining work of government, private sectors, scientists, and sociologists and philanthropists. We have to working together.

So I think the thing is how we can work in a way more efficiently. I believe always you should have a philanthropic heart inside, but business way. Because you have to get things done. That is what scientists tell us how to do properly. Business should tell us how to get things done efficiently. And government should have the good environment and the foundations of researching. And also we need a lot of media's guide to tell people how we do it.

But I think the—this area, Asia-Pacific, especially China, we are taking good actions. But we need to do in a way that is really workable. I bought a big piece of land in Brandon—Adirondacks, in the States, the forest. The reason I bought it is not for buying the forest. The reason I buy it is buy the experience. How did America solve the problem in the last century—the thirties—how they solved the problem there? And we'll bring the technology, bring the know-how back to China, back to this part of the world. I think it's the opportunity.

The President. Good.

Mr. Ma. And it's too late to worry. We have to make action, join together. This is what we believe.

Economic Development/Climate Change

The President. Excellent, excellent. And, Aisa, the closing comments. I mean, obviously, you're about to scale up, and I'm—we're confident that you'll be successful. But one of the most important things that you've said, in my mind at least, is that this starts from the bottom up; that when—whether it's in the Philippines or in Tanzania or anywhere in the world, that people who are trying to improve their lives—that they can't be asked to just stay poor in order to solve this problem. They need electricity. They want transportation. They want the same things that exist in developing nations. But what that means is, is that if we're working at that grassroots level, seeing what folks need, and figuring out in an efficient way how to deliver improved quality of life while being environmentally sustainable, that's an enormous opportunity. And—but it starts at looking at the aspirations and hopes of ordinary people. Is that a fair thing to say?

Ms. Mijeno. Yes. It's mainly a collaborative effort. You should not just, like, rely on the government. Of course, you should also do your part, both as a citizen of the nation to help your people.

So, like, what we're doing, where I'm focusing on what I'm good at, which is of course, R&D, research and development. And we just entered, with the help of a local incubation program here in the Philippines, we were able to partner with a local manufacturing company who is trying to help us assemble the lamp. And we're also in talks—we have—we are getting so many support from organizations and foundations to distribute the lamps across the

Philippines. So, with all those, it's a collaborative effort.

So you have to, of course, be open with regards to partnering and helping out people—especially in our case, people that don't have access to electricity. Electricity is a basic need, and we should—light is a basic need, and we should be addressing that. And before I—of course, before I close—before I get my—get to my closing remark, I would like to focus on climate change, coming from an academic background. So I just wanted to emphasize that climate change is real. So it's a fact. It's not a myth that scientists created in order to get funding or grants. [*Laughter*] So it's real. So it's happening now.

Just to give you like a simple analogy of what stage we are in in climate change right now, it's like—climate change is like cancer. So, at stage one, your cells start mutating. And then, at stage two, you start feeling the symptoms. If you're self-aware, you go to the doctor and get treatment. If you're not aware, of course, you take it for granted, and then you go into stage three. You start feeling the severe effects of the symptoms, until finally stage four, you're noticing that your health starts declining. You get the best oncologist, pay the best hospital, but it's not working because everything is too late.

The President. Right.

Ms. Mijeno. So climate change is like that. So, right now, I believe so, we are in stage two. So it's—we're at stage two, so——

The President. I'm just saying, people. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Ma. Thank you for matchmaking. All right.

The President. You don't want to get to stage four.

Ms. Mijeno. Yes, and we don't want to get the cancer.

The President. And we all have a huge investment in making sure that our children, our grandchildren, our great-grandchildren are able to enjoy prosperity. And it—that's dependent ultimately on a planet that accommodates us.

I will say that you—the lamp you talked about, in addition to providing light, you can also charge a cell phone, right?

Ms. Mijeno. Charge a phone, yes.

The President. And if you, if you're—if people have these lamps, they're more likely to charge their cell phone, which means they're more likely to use e-commerce. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Mijeno. Yes.

Mr. Ma. Yes.

The President. And more likely to purchase things through Alibaba.

Mr. Ma. We will sell it online.

The President. So I think that there's a synergy here. Everybody, please give Jack and Aisa a big round of applause.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. at the Makati Shangri-La Manila hotel. In his remarks, he referred to President Xi Jinping of China; and William H. Gates III, founder, technology adviser, and board member, Microsoft Corp. Ms. Mijeno referred to her brother Raphael Mijeno, cofounder and chief financial officer, SALt.

Remarks During a Meeting With Trans-Pacific Partnership Leaders in Manila
November 18, 2015

Well, I want to welcome all the leaders and Trade Ministers who are here. This marks our first gathering at the leaders level since our 12 countries agreed to the landmark Trans-Pacific Partnership. We were able to complete the negotiations thanks to the commitment of the leaders here. And I thank each of you, but I think it's also appropriate for us to thank our Trade Ministers and their teams who engaged in extraordinary work in some very challenging negotiations across a wide range of issues. All of you did an outstanding job.

TPP is at the heart of our shared vision for the future of this dynamic region. We want all countries to pursue their interests and prosperity peacefully, based on common rules of the road on an open, level playing field of fair trade. And our countries comprise nearly 40

percent of global GDP and some one-third of global trade. So this isn't about boosting exports between our countries in the Asia-Pacific. The TPP is also helping to write the rules of global trade for the 21st century.

This is the highest standard and most progressive trade deal ever concluded. It includes strong protections for workers, prohibitions against child labor and forced labor. It has provisions to protect the environment, to help stop wildlife trafficking, to protect our oceans. These are enforceable provisions that can be brought to bear much as the same way any provisions related to tariffs can be dealt with. And as a consequence, this is not only a good deal economically, it also reflects our common values.

The TPP includes countries large and small, developed and developing. But we have a shared vision of how to move forward. Today we're going to discuss the road ahead to ensure that TPP is enacted in each of our countries as swiftly as possible. Obviously, execution is critical after we have arrived at the text.

And I just want to once again commend all the leaders here for their extraordinary leadership. This is not easy to do. The politics of any trade agreement are difficult. The fact that everyone here has stepped up and made some hard decisions that are going to pay off for decades to come, I think, is a testimony to the vision that was reflected. And I want to congratulate all of you for outstanding work. Okay?

Thank you very much, everybody. With that, we're going to do a little work.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:20 p.m. in the garden tent at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila hotel.

Joint Statement—Trans-Pacific Partnership Leaders Statement
November 18, 2015

We, the Leaders of Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, United States, and Vietnam, met today to mark the conclusion of negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement. We congratulate our Ministers and negotiating teams, after more than five years of negotiations, on delivering a result that achieves the goal set out in 2011 of a comprehensive, balanced, and transformational regional agreement—one that spans the Pacific, touches three continents, and unites 800 million people.

By setting high-standard trade rules that will support 21st-century commerce and providing ambitious liberalization of trade and investment, the TPP will strengthen and broaden the mutually-beneficial linkages between our economies; enhance our regional and global competitiveness; support the creation of jobs and new opportunities for young people; promote economic growth and development in our countries; support innovation and help to alleviate poverty; and ensure the greatest benefits for our people.

We are pleased that the negotiated text of the TPP agreement is now available in full for review and consideration before it is signed. We look forward following signature to the expeditious consideration and approval of the TPP, consistent with each of our domestic processes. We will then focus on fully implementing it, so that our consumers, workers, farmers, and businesses both large and small can begin to realise its shared benefits as swiftly as possible and the better future that the TPP represents.

While our focus is on approval and implementation of the results of negotiations with our current partners, we have also seen interest from a number of economies throughout the region. This interest affirms that through TPP we are creating a new and compelling model for trade in one of the world's fastest growing and most dynamic regions.

We welcome Prime Minister Trudeau to his first TPP Leaders' meeting after taking office two weeks ago. We also welcome his commitment to have his new government review the agreement and engage in a consultation process.

NOTE: The joint statement referred to Prime Minister Justin P.J. Trudeau of Canada. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Justin P.J. Trudeau of Canada and an Exchange With Reporters in Manila, Philippines
November 19, 2015

President Obama. It is a great pleasure to have our first formal sit-down between myself and Prime Minister Trudeau. Obviously, there are no closer friends that we have than the Canadians. And we share values, we share culture. The ties between our people are extraordinary. We are NATO allies, and across the board, our interests align.

And I think we've seen the incredible excitement that Justin generated during his campaign in Canada. We're confident that he's going to be able to provide a great boost of energy and reform to the Canadian political landscape. And we're looking forward very much to working with him.

We had a chance to talk about security issues. Obviously, uppermost on our minds right now is the situation with ISIL and Syria, and we had excellent conversations about how our defense teams can coordinate and work not only on military operations there, but also how do we work on being able to stabilize the situation in Syria. I gave him an update on the diplomatic efforts.

And we discussed counterterrorism: Given the long, shared border that we have, how do we make sure that we are exchanging information about potential threats while, at the same time, preserving the civil liberties that both our peoples care so deeply about?

We also had a chance to talk about the economy and issues of the border, the amount of trade and commerce that takes place back and forth, and how we can continue to build on some of the good work that we've done. We are both soon-to-be signatories to the TPP agreement, and that's another area where we can continue to have important discussions. I know Justin has to review what's happened, but we think that after that process has taken place that Canada, the United States, and the other countries that are here can establish the kind of high-standards agreement that protects labor, protects the environment, protects the kind of high-value-added goods and services that we both excel at.

And finally, we talked about the Paris conference that's going to be coming up on climate change. And obviously, as—both of us are major energy producers, and we are glad that we are able to generate traditional fuels, but we also recognize that it's important for us to transition to cleaner fuels in order to secure the future of our children and our grandchildren. And I think Prime Minister Trudeau is very much committed to a successful Paris conference, and our teams have already coordinated on that. So I look forward to seeing a significant success, and I'm glad that we've got such a strong partner in Canada on that process.

Finally, we're going to have Justin down to the White House, hopefully, so we can have a more extensive, expanded bilateral. And I'm sure Michelle is going to want a visit with Canada's new First Lady. So we are going to be looking for a date for that to happen, but I'm confident that it will happen early in the year.

So, overall, not unexpected that it was a wonderful meeting, but we very much look forward to our collaborations and wish the new Government of Canada the very best of luck.

[*At this point, Prime Minister Trudeau spoke in French, and no translation was provided. He then spoke in English as follows.*]

Prime Minister Trudeau. It's a tremendous pleasure to be here for the first official sit-down, hopefully of many, with President Obama. We covered a wide range of topics, as is befitting the strong friendship between our two countries.

We talked about terrorism and security issues off the top and how Canada is committed to continuing to engage as a strong member of the coalition against ISIL in ways that will continue to support international efforts, including through military engagement around training,

to ensure that Canada continues to be a strong player, doing its part—and more than its part—to defend against ISIL.

We also talked a lot about economic issues, border issues, trade, the need for continued collaboration not just between the two of us, but at all levels of our governments to ensure that the relationship is as smooth and effective as possible. As you all know, I got elected on principles of cooperation, collaboration, respectful dialogue, and that's very much what we've established here today.

I look forward to going down to visit President Obama at the White House. I certainly know that my wife Sophie is going to be very excited to hear about Michelle's garden—[*laughter*]—because she has started a vegetable garden as well in our backyard. And it's going to be a wonderful time of strengthening ties between our two countries both on the economic, on the security, on the engagement with the world, and on the personal level.

President Obama. Excellent. We've still got time for a couple questions. Mike Memoli, L.A. Times.

President Obama's Advice to Prime Minister Trudeau/Syria/Syrian Refugees/Closure of Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Detention Facilities

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You've long insisted that Asad go ahead of any political transition in Syria, but I'm wondering, given the urgency on the fight against ISIL, if you could be more specific about what specifically—what you'd be willing—what the U.S. would be willing to accept in terms of any role for Asad. And specifically, I'm wondering, could the U.S. accept any scenario in which Asad stays in power for the elections, as the Russians are insisting?

And I also wanted to ask if you could follow up on your question—your comments yesterday on the refugee crisis. There are Republicans in Congress who are now linking it to Guantanamo and your pledge to end the detention there, saying now is not the time to transfer any detainees either outside or to U.S. soil. I'm wondering if you care to respond to that. And if you could give us a timeline in terms of closing that.

And to the Prime Minister, congratulations. I'm wondering, you campaigned on a pledge to end the Canadian air campaign against ISIL and insisted that you were going to follow through on that pledge even as you ramp up your ground training efforts. Has the President asked you to reconsider that pledge? And I also was interested in asking, given what the President noted about the excitement surrounding your campaign—we've noted in the press who cover these summits—it's reminiscent, many have pointed out, of what the President encountered during his early time in office. And have you sought his advice about how to manage expectations and to reconcile the promises you made and the realities of governance?

President Obama. You know, I'm actually going to horn in on that last question. [*Laughter*]

Prime Minister Trudeau. He's been very vocal and helpful.

President Obama. The first call I made to him, I said: Justin, congratulations. You and your family look great. I know Canadians are incredibly inspired by your message of hope and change. I just want to point out that I had no gray hair when I was in your shoes 7 years ago. And so, if you don't want to gray like me, you need to start dying it soon—[*laughter*]—because it gets too late——

Prime Minister Trudeau. So young and yet so cynical. [*Laughter*]

President Obama. Yes, yes. So that was my main advice.

But with respect to the situation in Syria, let me just make a couple of remarks. Number one, we have always had a sense of urgency about the need to defeat ISIL. And the 65-country coalition, including Canada, that we organized has put consistent, steady pressure on the organization. But what I've also said is that it's going to be a multiyear task and that we're not going to be able to fully succeed in eliminating their safe havens until we have a political settlement of some sort in Syria.

It is also my view that it is not going to be sufficient for us to have formal political processes that lead to Asad still being in power.

And the reason is not simply because of my opinion of him, it's because it is unimaginable that you can stop the civil war there when the overwhelming majority of people in Syria consider him to be a brutal murderous dictator. He cannot regain legitimacy. And if in fact he is still in power, then regardless of what outside powers do, there are still going to be large portions of the population that are fighting.

So the goal of Vienna is to find a process that initially identifies what are opposition groups that could be part of an inclusive future government that finds a structure for how a political transition, including potential constitutional changes within Syria, could be made: planning for elections, figuring out who's voting, how is that managed. That's where we are now. And then, being able to initiate a cease-fire that may not be observed by everyone, but at least would create some pockets of calm that could, hopefully, grow over time.

But I also believe that in order for this to be successful, at some point, the Russians and the Iranians are going to have to make a fundamental decision: Do they actually believe that they can prop up Asad and win on the ground militarily inside of Syria against all the opposition, or do they actually think that it is better to save the Syrian state and work with the international community and the U.N. to find a government that truly can be legitimate?

That is what is going to allow us to refocus our energies on ISIL as a unified world whereby—because it's not as if Iran or Russia see ISIL as a—as not being a serious threat. They recognize that it's a threat. The problem is, is that the strategy that they're pursuing right now doesn't allow them to focus attention there. That's why most of the Russian strikes at this point have not been directed at ISIL, they've been directed at propping up the Asad regime. So there's—they will have to make a fundamental shift, I believe, in policy.

What we are doing with our coalition members is recognizing that it is—may take some months for the Russians and the Iranians and, frankly, some of the members of the Syrian Government and ruling elites within the regime to recognize the truth that I just articulated. And if we can create habits of all the parties talking—talk about process, talk about structure, talk about how elections would be run, what would be the constitutional provisions—then that may create the space in which that pivot in the minds of the Russians and the Iranians and the Syrian people can be made. That's our effort; that's our goal.

But the bottom line is, I do not foresee a situation in which we can end the civil war in Syria while Asad remains in power. And by the way, that's not a matter of my decisionmaking. Even if I said that was okay, I still don't think it would actually work. You could not get the Syrian people, the majority of them, to agree to that kind of outcome. And you couldn't get a number of their neighbors to agree to that outcome as well.

Last thing to say was on the issue of refugees, the issues of Guantanamo. I think I've been very clear about my position on refugees. The fact is that America has always been open to allowing people from war-torn countries, who are subject to incredible hardship and repression and violence, to find refuge in our country. And ultimately, they have become part of the fabric of American life. The refugees from Syria are no different in that regard. The overwhelming numbers who have been applying are children, women, families, themselves victims of terrorism.

We already have in place the most vigorous vetting process that we have for anybody who is admitted. And in fact, if you look at how our process currently works, with the involvement of the National Counterterrorism Center, the FBI, the Defense Department, our intelligence organizations, we subject them to a process that takes anywhere from 18 to 24 months before they are admitted. And the idea that somehow they pose a more significant threat than all the tourists who pour into the United States every single day just doesn't jibe with reality. That's not what our law enforcement thinks. That's not what anybody who's looked at this problem thinks. They are already under much more scrutiny.

And so my expectation is, after the initial spasm of rhetoric, that people will settle down,

take a look at the facts, and we'll be able to proceed.

With respect to Guantanamo, in the same way that the rhetoric around refugees, suggesting that we should only allow Christians in or suggesting that we should bar every Syrian applicant even if they are underage, in the same way that that alienates Muslim Americans who are our fellow citizens, our friends and our neighbors and our coworkers, as well as the entire world of 1.6 billion Muslims, Guantanamo has been an enormous recruitment tool for organizations like ISIL. It's part of how they rationalize and justify their demented, sick perpetration of violence on innocent people.

And we can keep the American people safe while shutting down that operation. We've already reduced drastically the populations. Keep in mind that the bulk of people who are released from Guantanamo were done so under the previous administration, before I even came in. We have reduced that population further, and I expect that early by next year we may even have fewer than a hundred people at Guantanamo. We are spending millions of dollars per detainee, and it's not necessary for us to keep our people safe.

So we are going to go through meticulously, with Congress, what our options are and why we think this should be closed. I guarantee you there will be strong resistance, because in the aftermath of Paris, I think that there is just a very strong tendency for us to get worked up around issues that don't actually make us safer, but make for good political sound bites. And whether it's refugees or Guantanamo, those are handy answers, particularly for folks who aren't interested in engaging in a more serious debate about how do we invest in the long, hard slog of dealing with terrorism, doing the tough law enforcement work, gathering intelligence meticulously, and building the kind of diplomatic and military solutions that we need in the Middle East.

It's easier to talk about Guantanamo, I guess, than it is to, for example, pass an authorization for the use of military force in Syria, which hasn't gotten done yet. It's easier to talk about refugees than to talk about the hard work that's going to be required in putting organizations like ISIL out of business, but they don't actually have the kind of impact that we need on the problem. Okay?

Prime Minister Trudeau. In our conversation, in the election campaign, and in the time since the election campaign, I have always been very, very clear: Canada will and must remain a stronger member of the coalition against ISIL. And that means humanitarian aid, that means support on refugees, and it also means engaging militarily. There is much that Canada can do, and Canada will continue to work with our coalition partners to ensure that we're doing what we can, including militarily, to degrade and defeat ISIL over the long haul. That's what I reassured the President about, and that's what we're going to continue to be engaged in, and we're going to be discussing further the best ways Canada can move forward. But I made a clear commitment to Canadians to withdraw the six fighter jets, and we will be doing that in collaboration and coordination with all of our allies to ensure that the coalition still has tremendous impact against ISIL.

[*Prime Minister Trudeau spoke in French, and no translation was provided. He then spoke in English as follows.*]

On a personal level, the first phone call that we had, I don't dwell on the gray hair, because there's nothing I can do about that. But what Barack pointed out to me about how fast his daughters grew in the 7 years since that first night of his electoral victory really struck home for me. And I'm making sure to try and remain as attentive and present for my kids, not just because it makes me a better parent and a better person, but also because it's what keeps us focused as leaders on what actually matters, how we build a better world for our kids.

[*Prime Minister Trudeau continued in French, and no translation was provided. He then spoke in English as follows.*]

Bill Curry from the Globe and Mail, I believe you have a question.

Alternative and Renewable Energy Sources and Technologies/Canadian Oil Production

Q. Good afternoon. Prime Minister, you pledged this week to pursue a North American energy deal. How do you go about convincing the Americans to accept more of what the President described recently as "dirty oil" from Alberta?

And to the President, do you think that Alberta's oil sands bitumen needs to stay in the ground?

Prime Minister Trudeau. Well, first of all, one of the things that we've seen over the past years is, Canadians, right across the country, as well as our friends and our neighbors internationally from many countries, have felt that Canada hasn't been doing enough on the environmental front, hasn't done enough on regulations, on oversight, on pricing carbon, on demonstrating that we understand as a Government that there is no longer a choice to be made between what's good for the environment or what's good for the economy. They go together in the 21st century.

And one of the first tasks that I have on energy and climate issues is to reassure Canadians and others that we are serious about meeting reduction targets, about being positive actors on the world stage in the fight against climate change, and demonstrating a future in renewable and smart investments around energy. That's something that we are going to continue to do as we demonstrate that Canada is serious about taking on its responsibilities.

[*Prime Minister Trudeau spoke in French, and no translation was provided.*]

President Obama. We're all going to have to rethink how we do energy. I don't think that's unique to Canada. We're discussing it here at APEC. We discussed at the G–20. And we'll certainly be discussing it when we get to Paris.

My view has been that we have to transition. That transition does not happen overnight. Both of us are large oil and gas producers, and that's an important part of our economy. We make no apologies for that. But I also think we have to recognize that if we want to preserve this planet for our kids and our grandkids, then we're going to have to shift increasingly away from carbon-emitting energy sources.

And so it's not contradictory to say that there will be production in Canada and the United States, but that how we design incentives, how we design our research and development, how we think about fuel efficiency standards and the demand side of fossil fuels, how we incentivize businesses in what fuel choices they make, and the work we do with utilities—that all that should reflect the recognition that over time, our priorities are going to shift.

And my expectation is, is that Canada will be going through these same debates, just as we do. Now, some of this is also going to be dictated by market prices. Right now, in Alberta, a lot of the issues with respect to how they extract oil just have to do with the fact that oil prices are low, and they're going to be low, I suspect, for a while. And that actually presents both our countries an opportunity. With respect to producers, it's a good time to think about, how do you diversify your business model? With respect to consumers, it's a good time to think about, how are you using the savings you may make at the pump for installing a solar panel on your house and continuing to benefit from these low prices, not to use more, but to shift in how you spend your energy budget?

And this is going to be a messy, bumpy process worldwide, but I am confident that we can get it done. And the fact that we now have a very strong partner in Canada to help set up some global rules around how we approach this, I think, will be extraordinarily helpful. All right.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:41 p.m. in Room 218 of the Philippine International Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Sophie Grégoire-Trudeau, wife of Prime Minister Trudeau; and President Bashar al-Asad of Syria. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Prime Minister Trudeau referred to his children Xavier, Ella-Grace, and Hadrian Trudeau.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan in Manila

November 19, 2015

President Obama. Well, it is good once again to be with my friend, Prime Minister Abe, and the Japanese delegation. We have been able to forge, I think, an excellent relationship on a whole host of issues and this gives us an opportunity to continue to discuss both our security cooperation and our economic cooperation.

The United States-Japanese alliance is one of the linchpins of our security as well as Japan's, and this gives us an opportunity to continue to deepen that relationship, building off the discussions we've had in Washington. It includes the realignment in Okinawa. I want to congratulate Prime Minister Abe on his recent legislation related to bolstering Japanese defense capabilities, and it will give us a chance to talk about a wide range of threats, both regionally and internationally.

I also want to express my appreciation for the hard work that Shinzo has been involved with in building up stronger regional understandings. The trilateral meetings that have been taking place between Japan, China, and South Korea I think are especially important. And Shinzo and I both share an interest in continuing to foster rule of law, supporting international norms in areas like navigation—freedom of navigation and maritime law. And again, this bilateral gives us an opportunity to examine how we can work with some of the regional organizations like ASEAN in order to continue to maintain the stability and—that has been the hallmark of this region and has allowed for extraordinary prosperity and growth.

And finally, we'll be discussing a wide range of economic issues coming out of our meeting at the G–20. Both of us are interested in ratifying and implementing the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which has been a major topic of conversation here at APEC and the G–20. There's a recognition that these kinds of high-standard rules that provide enforceable protections for labor and the environment are the wave of the future and could not have been done without Shinzo's leadership. We'll also be talking about the climate change conference in Paris, and the importance of all of us working together in order to achieve a strong agreement that can protect the planet for future generations.

So I want to say that on every issue that is of great importance to the United States of America, we've got a great partner in Japan and we very much appreciate it.

Prime Minister Abe. Well, first of all, I feel like it's been long since we had a thorough discussion between us, since the last time I had this discussion with you, back in April, in Washington, DC. And also, thank you very much for your congratulatory message with regard to the passage of the legislation for peace and security. I achieved this development back in September. And also, I appreciate your kind remarks about the most recent holding of the trilateral summit among Japan, the Republic of Korea, and China.

And also, I'd like to underscore that the hospitality that you extended—and also the First Lady extended—to both of us is something that I won't forget about. And taking this opportunity, I would like to express my appreciation for that. And I believe my wife Akie might have already told you yesterday over dinner, but both myself and Akie are very much looking forward to welcoming Mr. President and the First Lady to the G–7 summit, which will be held in Ise Shima next year.

During my visit to the United States, together with you, Barack, we reaffirmed that there is a robust alliance between Japan and the United States. And after the visit, progress has been made in promoting our cooperation, for instance, in the economic context, such as in the areas of energy and infrastructure. I am delighted to know that there is now a basic agreement between us on public financing of coal-fired power generation and also the Federal funding has been provided to a maglev project so I am very pleased to see that we are achieving concrete results.

So, against that backdrop, I would like to turn this summit meeting into an occasion where we add a new introductory chapter for our renewed Japan-U.S. cooperation, through which we effectively utilize our robust alliance for the peace, stability, and prosperity regionally—namely, in the Asia-Pacific—and also, eventually, globally.

In our joint vision statement, which was released during my visit to the United States back in April, both of us confirmed that we will collaborate with each other through Japan's policy of what I call proactive contribution to peace, based on the principle of international cooperation and the U.S. rebalance policy. We also confirmed that we will further cooperate in ensuring regional peace, stability, and prosperity. So I would like to have a candid discussion with you, Barack, today on specific ways to materialize such cooperation. In addition, I very much look forward to having a discussion in addressing global challenges, including climate change.

President Obama. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:38 p.m. in the garden tent at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila hotel. Prime Minister Abe spoke in Japanese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at a Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative Town Hall at Taylor's University in Subang Jaya, Malaysia
November 20, 2015

The President. Hello, everybody! Everybody, have a seat. Thank you so much. Well, good afternoon. This is a—[*applause*]. Thank you! This is a very good-looking group. [*Laughter*] I want to thank Carrie for the introduction and your outstanding work to empower women in Singapore. Give Carrie a big round of applause. It is wonderful to be back in Malaysia. I want to thank everybody at Taylor's University for hosting us. Give them a big round of applause. And I want to thank the Government and the people of Malaysia for their hospitality and leadership this year in hosting ASEAN. So *selamat petang.* [*Laughter*]

I was just at the APEC summit in the Philippines. [*Applause*] The—well, we've got—the Philippines are in the house. And so I just landed a few minutes ago, and this is my first stop. Summits like APEC and ASEAN are important, and I meet with all these leaders, and we take pictures, and we talk about all kinds of things. So I don't mind spending time with older people like me. [*Laughter*] But one of the things that I love doing most on these trips is the time I spend with young people like you, because your energy and your idealism and your optimism—because that reflects the future and the promise of the ASEAN region.

I'm not going to give a long speech because this is a town hall and I want to spend most of my time in a conversation with you. I did one of these when I was here in K.L. last year. Once again, what I really want to do is take your questions, have a conversation about your hopes and your ideas, how you see the future. But I do want to briefly explain why I believe a partnership with America is so important.

As you know, I've got a strong personal connection to Southeast Asia. I spent time as a young boy in Indonesia. My sister Maya is—[*applause*]—Indonesia is in the house. And my sister Maya is half-Indonesian; she was born in Jakarta. My mother spent years working in rural villages in this region, empowering women. And so the rich tradition of the Pacific—the food, the people, which—I like the people, and I really like the food—[*laughter*]—this is part of who I am and how I see the world.

But even if I didn't have that special attachment, I would still know that the United States has to be a partner with Southeast Asia. It's critical for our shared future. It's home to so much of humanity, home to some of the world's fastest growing economies. And that's a key focus of my foreign policy: deepening en-

gagement with nations and peoples in this region.

And we've been very successful over the last several years, making great strides. We've strengthened our alliances. We've deepened our partnerships with emerging countries and institutions like ASEAN. We recently negotiated the landmark Trans-Pacific Partnership to grow our economies and support jobs in each of our countries. Together, we're working to stand up for human rights and democracy. And I want to commend, in particular, the people of Myanmar for their participation in last week's historic election. It is another critical step in their transition to a more peaceful and prosperous and democratic Myanmar.

But as important as they are, security alliances and trade agreements are not enough. Governments and even businesses don't have all the solutions. We've got to have a relationship that's from the bottom up, not just from the top down, not just among the most wealthy or powerful, but also from ordinary people who are trying to give opportunity to everybody. And so that people-to-people relationship is what's really important, and relationships between young people within the region and with the United States is what's really important. Connecting to each other, understanding each other can have a profound impact, whether it's a student exchange program or Yuna doing a duet with Usher. [*Laughter*]

Now, think about it. Here in the ASEAN region, 65 percent of the population is under 35 years old—65 percent. That's like 600 million people. That's a lot of people. Young people like you are going to define the future of this region for decades to come. And thanks to technology and social media, you're more connected to each other than ever before, you're more connected to the world than ever before. I can barely keep up with you. I've got to get help from Malia and Sasha just to figure out how to use the phone. [*Laughter*]

And perhaps more than any generation in human history, you have the power to change your communities and your countries and the world. And at a time when we face enormous global challenges—from the environment and climate change to empowering women, to income inequality and small-business development—we have to have your talents, and we have to have your skills.

A lot of us have been thinking about the horrific attacks in Paris. And when you think about the terrible vision of those who carried out those attacks, and you contrast that with the young people who are represented here, who are building things and helping each other and creating businesses and opportunities for themselves and for others, and when you think about the incredible potential of ASEAN as a place of religious diversity and ethnic diversity, you can set an example, not just to stand up to violent extremism, but to build interfaith dialogue, promote tolerance, and to combine an appreciation of your own culture and traditions with the modern world.

And for all these reasons, 2 years ago, we launched YSEALI, the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative. And the goal is to empower young people like you with the skills and the resources and the networks so you can turn your ideas into action. And since then, our YSEALI network has grown to more than 55,000 members across 10 ASEAN countries. We're still growing. We've held nine regional exchanges. We're offering workshops and online networking and hands-on training. We started a grant competition to support you as you work together across countries to tackle regional issues like climate change. I want to commend Malaysia for its new partnership with the Peace Corps to create a Malaysian volunteer corps that works in underserved communities in other ASEAN countries. That's part of the spirit of YSEALI.

And as part of our YSEALI Fellowship, we've now welcomed more than 300 young people from across ASEAN to the United States, with another 200 who are coming in the next 6 months. So these Fellows study in American universities. They experience our State and local government. They work in our nonprofit sector. They intern in major U.S. companies. I welcomed some Fellows to the White House. And then, they take these experiences home, and they apply them to their

communities. And they're not just learning from the people that they're working with in the United States, they're learning from each other as part of network.

So they come back, they're launching their own businesses. They're advocating for an end to human trafficking or expanding women's rights, fighting corruption, promoting transparency and good governance. The point is, every day, the young men and women of YSEALI are making a difference across this region.

And just as important as the tools and the skills that you're gaining is the connections that you're creating, because as part of the YSEALI network, you're forging friendships that you'll draw on for a lifetime. And you're sharing ideas and learning from each other. Because when you're trying to turn that idea into a business or start a new civic organization or even running for office, it helps to have people who understand the kind of change that you're trying to make and who you can go to for help and encouragement. And maybe they have some experiences that are relevant to what you're trying to do. So, as young people, you have to stand together.

And that's why YSEALI is so important. Because, of all the challenges and threats that the world faces, I am absolutely confident that young people like you, with your passion and drive and commitment, you can make a difference. And I know you will. You already are.

So, before I open it up for questions, one of the things I want to do is just call on a few people who've been part of the YSEALI network so they can give you just some examples of the great work that they're doing. Also I want some of the older people here to hear about the wonderful things—[*laughter*]—YSEALI is doing. So I've got three individuals that I want to call on first, and then I'm just going to open it up and we'll have a good conversation.

So the first, we're going to have Htoo Kyaw Win from Burma who's working on behalf of human rights and civil society organizations as part of the transition to democracy. So go ahead, please—do we have—by the way, do we have microphones, or—here we go.

Journal of Human Rights and Democracy Editor Htoo Kyaw Win. Thank you so much, Mr. President. And you said that recently the congratulation for our election. Yes, it's a pleasure time for me, this time, it's a better time for me. Even that over 10 years ago said, I cannot imagine that I will be here now, because, as you know, Myanmar people have been staying under the military regime for a long time. But after 2010 elections, as you know, Myanmar is a little bit, I mean, the transparency, and some settle. So I joined—I mean, 2013, I founded the Myanmar Knowledge Society that is a publication house which focuses on the human rights and democracy issues. I am one of the editors of the Journal of Human Rights and Democracy. That is a very factual journal of human rights in Myanmar after 2010. And then, last spring, I joined, I mean, the YSEALI program that accepted to say the ACYPL program—the American Council of Young Political Progress. So I applied to the program. So I was in Washington, DC. I was working in the Amnesty International as my internship. And there, even I didn't have, I mean, friends across the ASEAN country. But after I applied this program, I've got now so many ASEAN countries, especially my friends from the Indonesia. We always talk about their transitional period. And we, Myanmar people, always compare with the, I mean, transitional period and democratization process in Indonesia. We always talk about Indonesia. So I can learn some knowledge and ideas and experience from my friends from Indonesia. So that is why I'm in the YSEALI program, inspire me too much: before, after very, very difference for me.

So I do encourage you guys, we would go on in the future. And the, by the way, I really thank you, Mr. President, because I think I noticed that actually one of your policy—I mean, engagement policy I admire most because you use this policy as a test—Myanmar—I mean, more transparency and open to the democracy. Just now, recently, our historic and successful election had been. So that is one of the outcomes of your engagement policy. And the other outcome is me and my friends from there, Myanmar.

One of my friends from here, he is the—actually the former political prisoner. We were working politics, for governance here. He was sentenced to prison—me too. Now, he's now studying in the Australian National University. His subject is political science. Now, I am in Myanmar—human rights defender for him. I am the chairperson of that for us.

Yes, thank you. My program just provided initiatives across the country. Now, I am working for promoting the human rights and democracy in Myanmar—not only Myanmar, but also the world, especially the Southeast Asian region. Thank you so much.

The President. Fantastic. Well, thank you, Htoo Kyaw. That was an outstanding presentation. And we are feeling optimistic about what can happen in Myanmar, in part because of young people like you.

Next, we've got Choon Sian Choo from Malaysia who is training young people in entrepreneurship.

LifeChamp Chief Executive Officer Choon Sian Choo. Thank you, Mr. President. And it was such an honor to be here. My name is Choon Sian from Malaysia, and I'm the founder of this youth development organization called LifeChamp. So, in Malaysia, we have the highest household debt in ASEAN—[*inaudible*]—ASEAN. And with our youth piling up massive college loans, college loans at a young age, and eventually, they resort to seeking credit counseling. So what we do through our Young Money Master program is to teach them to have good money habits, good money beliefs, teach them some money management skills, personal financial planning, and how to do their investment.

So YSEALI program has helped me tremendously in my endeavor. So, through YSEALI, I was flown to Washington, DC, to participate in a global summit, whereby, I get to learn. I joined the financial inclusion track, which I got to learn from some of the world's best minds on how I can structure the more effective financial education curriculum.

So, upon my return, I took the ideas and came back and restructured my program to improve my curriculum. And eventually, YSEALI helped me to launch a series of campaigns and workshops nationwide to reach out to the underprivileged children, underprivileged students to teach them about to be more money-smart. And the other way we do is, we always have to talk about entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship as well.

So I want to thank President for such a marvelous initiative. And before—because of that, I learned, and I benefited. I thank you so much.

The President. Thank you. Thank you. That's outstanding.

So, finally, we've got Chindavone Sanlath from Laos, who is dedicating herself to protecting the environment. Chindavone.

YSEALI Institute on Global Environmental Issues Alumna Chindavone Sanlath. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I am very, very happy to be here today. I am Chindavone, a YSEALI alumni from Laos PDR. I was born in one of the most remote parts of Laos. And my father passed away before I was born. And because of my background, I never thought that one day I would be able to help my community to make some changes to my community. Because of YSEALI, now my thoughts changed.

Being a part of YSEALI expanded my thinking and enabled me to see the challenges facing my community and empowered me to be a part of the solution. I'm now working with a project called Forest Law Enforcement, Governance, and Trade, which aims to promote legal timber trade and sustainable forest management. I have already been able to apply the lessons I learned in Montana to help improve forest management in Laos. YSEALI is my life-changing chapter. Thank you very much.

The President. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. So you can tell, just talking to these young people, the incredible things that they're already doing. I am wondering, was it cold in Montana? [*Laughter*] Did you have a big coat?

Ms. Sanlath. No.

The President. No, when you were in Montana, did you have to wear a big coat? Or was it——

Ms. Sanlath. Oh, no, no——

The President. It was okay? All right, you're tough. Because Montana is cold. [*Laughter*] But the—maybe, I guess if it was in the summer, it was okay. Yes, the—it's beautiful there.

But this just gives you some sense of the incredible work that's already being done by so many of these young people.

So, with that, I want to open it up for questions, comments, ideas. And what—[*laughter*]—here's what I'm going to do, though, is I'm going to call—I'm going to go boy, girl, boy, girl. [*Laughter*] That way we can make sure that it's fair. I'm also going to take off my jacket because it is a little warm. [*Laughter*] And I know you may ask me some tough questions, so I want to—[*applause*]. Okay, so let's see who's going to go first.

The—I'm going to call this young lady right here, in the green. And if you can please introduce yourself first and then the question or the comment.

Q. Hi. Thank you, Mr. President. My name is Elizabeth, and I'm from Indonesia.

The President. Hey, *apa kabar?*

[*At this point, the questioner responded in Bahasa Indonesia, and no translation was provided.*]

The President. Dari mana? Jakarta?

Climate Change/Alternative and Renewable Energy Sources and Technologies

Q. Jakarta. Well, recently, you had a discussion about the role of the entrepreneurs to tackle climate change. So my question is basically—because some of us here are entrepreneurs. We are not yet political leaders, but we are entrepreneurs. So what is your expectation from entrepreneurs, young fellows, YSEALI for the climate change?

The President. Good. The——

Q. And also——

The President. Yes?

Q. [*Laughter*] Yes, for the upcoming U.N. climate change in Paris, whether you are optimistic about the result of that.

The President. Good. What kind of business do you want to start?

Q. Now I'm in the energy and environment, so I'm working——

The President. Do you already have a business going——

Q. Not yet.

The President. ——or you have an idea that you want to do?

Q. Not yet. I have an idea about what to create.

The President. Excellent. Okay.

Q. Thank you. Yes.

The President. Thank you. The—well, first of all, I think that so many of the young people here understand why climate change is so important. The science is very clear that because of the carbon emissions that we send in, mostly from the use of fossil fuels—oil, gas, coal—the temperatures worldwide, on average, are getting higher. And that begins to change weather patterns. The oceans begin to get warmer. The ice in the Arctic begins to melt. And you get a feedback loop that as things get warmer, that creates even more of a trend towards warming.

And if we don't stop the amount of carbon that we send out and we don't find new ways of creating energy, then you'll see the oceans rise, more extreme weather events, more drought, more flooding, bigger hurricanes, typhoons. And it could have a devastating effect on countries all around the world. And probably, the biggest effect will be on poorer countries who don't have as much infrastructure to protect themselves.

So this is not just an environmental issue, but it's also a development issue. And once it starts, it's hard to reverse. So this is—this has to be one of our highest priorities, but it's a hard issue to deal with because it doesn't happen right away. All right? It happens gradually. And so people always think, well, that's something we don't have to worry about now. But if we don't get started now, we're going—it's going to be too late.

So we have to be wise and think about the future. And young people especially, you have to care about this a lot, because if you don't do anything about it, you're the ones who are going to have to deal with it. I'll be gone. [*Laugh-*

ter] You'll—but you'll have to deal with it, and your children and your grandchildren.

So business has an important role to play in this because, first of all, a lot of the carbon pollution is created by industry for energy production, for electricity production, power plants, transportation. And one of the things that we're trying to do is to encourage companies to both become more efficient so that they're using less energy, which means that they can produce the same amount with less electricity or less oil or less gas. Also, transition to new energy forms, like solar or wind that are clean. And create, through research and development and new products, new ways of producing energy.

So when I was in the Philippines, I was with Jack Ma, who was the founder of Alibaba, and that's a huge company that is really the leader in e-commerce in Asia. But I was also with a young woman who had just invented a lamp that she—that could generate energy with sea water. So she could just take one cup of water and two tablets of salt or take seawater potentially from the ocean, and it would create 8 hours of light, instead of using kerosene. So she's now trying to get funding to manufacture and distribute this lamp that she has created.

And business is going to be critical in dealing with climate change, because sometimes—especially in poorer countries—people think, well, we don't have to worry about the environment because, first, we have to develop and create businesses and become wealthier, and then, we can worry later about the environment. But part of what I'm trying to persuade business is that you have start now, and there's business opportunities. You can make money in clean energy, instead of using dirty energy.

And more and more businesses, I think, are beginning to realize that there's no contradiction. And the same is true in countries as well. You look at a country like China that has developed so fast, but now they can't breathe in Beijing because the pollution can be so bad, and they're starting to realize that if they want to sustain their development, they've got to start using different production models. And businesses can help to design new ways of manufacturing and new ways of developing energy. So we really want to encourage businesses to get involved, and they can make money doing it.

The most polluting industries are typically the old-fashioned industries, the old ways of doing business. I know that people here, for example, have been dealing with the smoke from the peat fires, right, in—that are coming over from Indonesia. Well, the palm oil industry, that's not a high-value industry. I mean, that's not something that's going to develop a strong middle class and business opportunities over the long term. It's just a classic extractive industry or commodity industry. And in the modern economy, you want to be inventing new products and services rather than just figuring out what you can take out of the ground. And so I'm encouraging both governments and businesses to start thinking about the opportunities of clean energy.

In Paris, our hope is to get all the countries to agree that they will set targets for reducing carbon emissions. It won't be the same for every country. More developed countries, they should do more. Less developed, they don't have to do as much because they haven't contributed so much to carbon pollution. But everybody has to do something. And what we want to do is have each country try to create incentives for businesses, whether it's tax breaks or investments in research so that businesses can work alongside communities to try to solve the problem. And I feel optimistic that we'll get it done. It won't be as strong initially as it needs to be eventually, but if we start now and everybody agrees that this is important and we do something, then I'm confident that we'll be able to solve the problem. Okay? Okay? *Terima kasih*. Yes?

All right. So it's a young man's turn. This young man in the blue tie right here. Yes, you. Hold on one second.

Q. Oh, you hold it? Okay, thanks. So good afternoon, Mr. President. My name is Alfeus. I'm from Malaysia.

The President. Did you say Elvis?

Q. Oh, sorry, no, not Elvis. Alfeus.

The President. Alfeus, okay.

Q. Nice to meet you Mr. President.

The President. Because I was thinking it was—we had Elvis in the building. [*Laughter*]

Q. Okay, so——

The President. Alfeus. That's a cool name.

Transparency and Accountability in Government

Q. Thanks. The same as yours. [*Laughter*] Okay, so—yes, so my fellow YSEALI cohorts and I are actually results of your vision, so thank you for that. And we are very glad to have you here with us talking about democracy and freedom of speech. Malaysia is currently embroiled in a political scandal. And its fall—and its failed justice system can bring no rights. Therefore, as thankful as I am for this, I would like to take this opportunity to ask you for your assistance in raising this issue to the Prime Minister of Malaysia and encourage transparency and independence of operations—[*applause*]—thank you—of the Malaysia Anti-Corruption Commission, Public Accounts Committee, the Bank Negara, and all media organizations. So thank you.

The President. Good. Okay. The—well, I will do it. [*Laughter*] So I—now, I admit that I was going to do it anyway, but now that I hear it from you, I'm definitely going to do it. But see, now, keep in mind, the United States, we always have to be a little careful because we're such a large country and we have a lot of influence; I think there are times sometimes when people say they don't want us meddling in their internal affairs. And we—the United States has to have some humility because there have been times where we did the wrong thing. There have been times where we have problems in our own country. Right? And so we will want to go tell other people what to do, but then back home, we're not always doing what we say we should do.

But I do believe that there are basic values that we all share. And one of those values is that countries work best when everybody has a voice that can be respected and that the press is able to report on what is happening in current affairs and people can organize politically peacefully to try to bring about change and that there's transparency and accountability. And when you look at which countries have done best in terms of development, typically, over time, those countries that have some accountability and some measure of personal freedom tend to do better, and those countries that don't, have more problems.

So whenever I meet in international forums like APEC or ASEAN, whenever I meet with individual leaders, I try to encourage them to move more in the direction of transparency, accountability, to empower people so that they can participate in civic life. And I always want to be honest with people whenever I talk to folks, that that doesn't mean that we don't do business with countries sometimes, just because we have shared security interests or economic interests. If I—I have to meet with President Xi of China, even though I may not agree with his—the approach of his Government towards human rights, because China is such a big country. And on something like climate change, if we don't cooperate, then we won't solve the problem.

There are occasions everywhere in the world where I will meet, and the United States has a relationship and cooperates with a country, even though their human rights record may not be good. But I want to assure you that in all of those meetings, we always raise these issues. And part of what we're trying to do also is to create an international—international support for these issues.

So one of the things that I did at the U.N., for example, was something called the Open Government Partnership. And the idea behind the Open Government Partnership is that every country each year makes a pledge for what they're going to do to make them—themselves more accountable, more open, more transparent, to root out corruption. And not everybody starts out at the same place. But just by encouraging people to put out plans, even if they don't always meet the plans right away, it raises the standards and the sights of people and encourages people to aspire to improvements.

And the—it's just like democracy. When we were hearing about Myanmar, and they talked about Indonesia as an example. Well, Indonesia, when I was living there as a child, was not a democracy. Right? It was basically you had

President Suharto, and you had the military, and there weren't elections every few years.

And it didn't happen right away; the transition took some time. But as long as we keep on encouraging that kind of change, I think we really can make a difference. Okay?

Q. Thank you.

The President. Thank you. All right. Good question.

All right. That young lady right there. You. Yes, you. Yes, you. Hold on, we've got to get a microphone.

Agriculture

Q. Good afternoon, President Obama. Thank you for coming to the Philippines.

The President. No, it was——

Q. Yes, I am Cherrie. I am Filipina. So I'm a founding farmer and chairman of AGREA Agricultural Systems International, Inc. Actually, AGREA is also a partner of U.S. Embassy Public Affairs in Manila. We are helping them to send four young fellows in the professional fellowship program. And for that, what we do in AGREA, actually, is, we're trying to make farming cool, smart, sexy, and humane in the Philippines. [*Laughter*]

The President. Okay.

Q. Yes, because it started when I spoke in the World Economic Forum, and I said let's make farming sexy in front of our President of Philippines, and it became a headline, so I need to start inputting something in program about it. [*Laughter*] But yes, we've been helping a lot of farmers in the Philippines and now including fishermen. And I know you have a garden in the White House by the First Lady——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——and thank you, thank you so much for that. It's a common denominator problem in ASEAN countries right now that our farmers are endangered species. They're getting older; the average age is 57 years old. And there is a diminishing interest for the young people to be involved in agriculture.

And speaking of climate change, in connection to agriculture and exponentially growing population, how do you see the importance of young people to be involved in not just food production, but also food wastage. Thank you.

The President. I think that's a great question. A great question. So, first of all, although interest among young people in farming may be diminishing, if you look at the ASEAN countries, the majority of people are still making their living on the land, and you still have a lot of subsistence farming and small plots. And any country that is still in a development stage has to focus on agriculture. That's true in Africa. That's true in Latin America. It's true here in the ASEAN countries.

And it depends on the country, obviously, but typically, the first step is to help each farmer become more efficient. Because usually farmers are not—in poorer countries, they're usually not using all the agricultural technology that's available. And some of it is very simple, and some of it's very cheap, but they don't have the information. So one of the things that we're trying to do, through a program called Feed the Future, is to find farmers, help—work with countries to just give them basic seeds, irrigation practices, how do you improve your yields. And we've been able to see—because it's starting at a such a low point—farmers doubling their yields on the same amount of land with a—without a lot of mechanization, without big capital expenditures.

Once they are able to increase production, then the next step is making sure that they get a fair price. All right? And one of the things that's been really interesting is the power of the Internet to empower farmers, because in most countries these days, even in rural areas, people have a cell phone. And so part of what we're helping people to do is to find out what are the market prices for their products on a day-to-day basis on their cell phones so that they don't get cheated. They know what it's being sold—how much it's being sold in the city, so now whoever the middleman is, they know that they should be asking for a certain price for their crops, and they can start planning in terms of how their—how much grain, versus fruits and vegetables, or what have you, that they're farming. And that can also increase their incomes, not just their production.

Once you do that, then they can start buying some—for example, one of the programs we're seeing is an entire village sharing one tractor. It's sort of like an Uber for farmers. [*Laughter*] So the—instead of—it's so expensive to buy an entire tractor, a lot of farmers can't afford that, but if you set up a system where you can buy a tractor and then, essentially, they can rent that tractor or share—timeshare that tractor, now, suddenly, that also produces increased yields.

And then, the next stage is to think about, okay, instead of just producing the product itself, can we also then do some of the processing? And you can start putting together cooperatives, for example, for food processing so that you're moving up the value chain.

But the point is, is that when we start thinking about agriculture not just as subsistence, but also how is it interacting with the market, how are you applying technology, now it starts looking kind of sexy—[*laughter*]—because you can actually—a young person can, instead of moving to the city, they can stay in their village and watch slowly their standards of living improve and begin to create small businesses, and the entire community can rise even as their own prospects improve.

And so this is something that we're really going to try to focus on. And we're working with governments, but also with NGOs, to try to do as much of this work as possible.

But I think you're raising an important point. We see this in the United States as well, that a lot of young people don't think that farming is a high ambition. And we want to encourage people to recognize that working on the land is a wonderful and important thing. And if we're going to feed enough people, then we've got to have more farmers. And we've also got to make sure that they're getting good terms on loans, because oftentimes, what holds them back is just having enough capital, just a little bit of seed capital, in order to be able to do what they need to do.

So good luck. Keep up the great work.

Good. All right, let's see. Hold on. This young man in the purple shirt. That's a nice-looking shirt. [*Applause*] Now, why was everybody cheering for him? I mean, he does look nice in his purple shirt, but—[*laughter*].

The President's Advice to Young People

Q. Thank you, President, and greetings. My name is Deng. I'm from Cambodia. My question is, since many people have focused on a lot of high issues, I want to go low, so—[*laughter*].

The President. How low are you going to go? [*Laughter*]

Q. I have no idea. So the question that I want to ask you is that since yourself is aging toward a very senior life, and—[*laughter*].

The President. That's pretty low. [*Laughter*]

Q. I'm sorry, President. [*Laughter*] Okay, so—okay, just go straight to the question. [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes.

Q. So how do you see your kids and the young people, the young leaders as the insulin between the old people and the young people? Because from my society, the gap between the old and the young, it's very divided. So I want to see your perspective toward what is your initiative and what is your will as a President, people—a person who see a lot of problems. So what do you want to see from young people like us in the future when you get old? So what—[*laughter*]. I think you get my question, right? Thank you so much.

The President. I got your question. Sit down. [*Laughter*] The—well, the first thing I want from young people is to stop calling me old. [*Laughter*] Come on. You hurt my feelings. [*Laughter*] The—well, look, we all get old, it's true. [*Laughter*] And when I came into office, I had no gray hair, and now I have a lot. [*Laughter*] Although, I will tell you that I don't dye my hair, and a lot of my fellow leaders do. [*Laughter*] I'm just saying. I won't say who. [*Laughter*] But their barbers know, their hairdressers.

I think that the most important thing for young people is that they're not trapped in the past. And human progress is driven by looking at a problem with fresh eyes, with new eyes. And as you get older, what happens is, is that you just get in the habit of seeing the same thing and it becomes routine to you, normal. But when you're young, you ask—your question is, well, why does it have to be this way?

All right? Why does my community have to be poor? Why do we have pollution in the air? Why do we treat women differently than men when it comes to being able to go to college and get an education? Why should we discriminate against a minority group in our country?

And that's the power of young people, is asking why. Now, little kids, they naturally do that, right? When you talk to a 4-year-old or a 5-year-old, 6-year-old, you tell them to do something—"Why?" [*Laughter*] "Why?" And sometimes, as parents, we try to say, "Because I told you so." [*Laughter*] And we don't want to talk about it, right? But that impulse to ask why is actually what drives human progress. That's the reason that the steam engine was created. That's the reason the Internet was created. That's the reason that Martin Luther King was able to march and change America. That's the reason that Gandhi was able to liberate India—is because they didn't take for granted the way things are, but instead tried to dream about the way things could be.

And that's the job of young people. Old people don't do that because they're comfortable or they've become resigned or they become cynical or they're just tired or they're comfortable, and so they don't ask those questions. But young people, you have to ask those questions. All right?

Now, you then have to work. And one of the things that I always say to young people when I talk to them anywhere, including in the United States, one of the flaws of young people is, you're oftentimes impatient. And bringing about change, doing anything important typically takes time, and it's hard work, and sometimes, you'll fail initially and you'll have to stay with it. And so you can't give up. So, if you're asking the question, how am I going to—why not start a business for clean energy? Well, you have to have an idea, you have to get capital, you have to have a business plan, you have to create the business. It may not work right away. You may get frustrated. If you're trying to bring about political change, there may be a lot of risks if you're trying to bring about political change in a place like Myanmar. Are you willing to take those risks? Are you willing to make sacrifices? What happens when it doesn't work initially? Are you willing to then get back up and start again?

And that, I think, is the most important thing. Vision is important, but then, you also have to have the persistence to keep working to make progress. And I always tell young people to have big dreams, but then also be willing to work for those dreams. It's not going to come right away. All right? Okay.

Yes, young lady right here. Here, I'm sure we have a microphone.

The President's Advice to Young People/U.S. Political System/Racial, Ethnic, and Religious Discrimination

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. My name is Jocelyn, and I'm from Malaysia. Last year, I joined the YSEALI program in spring, and I spent 5 weeks in Washington, DC. So, after we have been exposed to a lot of different political parties' campaigns and we have been exposed to a lot of different nonprofit organizations fighting for interests of political communities in the country. So my question for you today is what are the current challenges of the United States of America as a developed country, and what are the advice that you would provide to the potential young leaders in this region to avoid the pitfalls of the challenges facing the U.S. today?

The President. Well, that's a great question. I mean, look, the United States in many ways is better positioned than it has ever been for leadership in the 21st century. Our economy, after the crisis in 2007, 2008, has recovered faster than almost any other country. Our—and our economy is stronger than most other large, developed economies in the world. We are producing more energy than ever before, producing more clean energy than ever before. More young people are going to college than ever before. We have expanded health care through the program that I set up—the Affordable Care Act. We have some of the best businesses in the world, incredible entrepreneurship, and we remain the leader in innovation and new ideas. And in the technology sector,

obviously, we continue to generate new ideas all the time.

But when you go to the United States, I think there are still some anxieties. And I would say that, number one, in the United States, there is a growing inequality that I think is a real problem not just for the United States, but around the world. And some of this has to do with technology is replacing low-skilled jobs and automation, and so it's harder for people, if they don't have good educations, to make a living. There's more global competition; that's putting pressure on middle class families. And when people feel economic stress and inequality, then I think the—then politics becomes harder because people are afraid for their futures and sometimes politics can become much more divided than it used to be.

Also, what happens is, when there's more inequality, the people who are powerful can influence the political system to further reinforce their privilege, and it makes it harder for ordinary people to feel that they have influence on the political process. And so people become cynical.

Now, these are all problems that can be solved, and I'm confident we will eventually solve them. But right now our political system does not work as well as it should. And when I—what I would say to young leaders, what sort of pitfalls should you avoid, I would say, number one, it is very important to avoid any political system where money overwhelms ideas. And the United States political process has become so expensive, and it lasts so long, and even though I was successful in it, I—we spent hundreds of millions of dollars in television advertising and in all the things that go into a U.S. Presidential campaign. But it's also true for Members of Congress. And when politicians have to raise so much money all the time, then they start listening a little bit more to the people who have money, as opposed to ordinary people.

And that, I think, is a danger that can be avoided by the system that you set up to make sure that campaigns are not reliant just on money. That's something to avoid.

I think the second thing is to—politics in the United States increasingly is defined by personal attacks and saying very sensational things in the media. Now, that's true for politics everywhere to some degree. But I think that for young leaders like you, as you get into politics, trying to focus on issues, and trying to debate people you disagree with without saying that they're a terrible person, I think that's something that you always have to watch out for.

Historically, in the United States, the issue of race has been very prominent. And that's not unique to the United States; every country has some divisions—not every country, but many countries have divisions around racial or religious or ethnic differences. And the young people of YSEALI, I really hope that all of you are fighting against the kinds of attitudes where you organize political parties or you organize interest groups just around ethnic or racial or tribal lines. Because when you start doing that, it's very easy for people to start thinking that whoever is not part of my group is somehow less than me. And once that mindset comes in, that's how violence happens. That's how discrimination happens. And societies that are divided ethnically and racially are almost never successful over the long term.

Now, the United States, we've struggled with this for over 200 years, but it's still an issue that comes up. And so I would guard against that here in your home countries. But the truth is, here in Southeast Asia, as everybody here knows, that same kind of tendency happens. All right? I mean, I remember when I was growing up in Indonesia, every once in a while you would have riots against the Chinese Indonesians, even though they were part of the community. But somebody would spark—start saying, "Hey, those people, that's our problem." And you'd have stores burned down and people killed.

And right now, in Myanmar, one of the big challenges that's going to have to be addressed is how ethnic groups are treated. The Rohingya, in Myanmar right now, are treated differently, even though they've been living there for generations. But there are a lot of people, because they're of a different religious faith, they

say those aren't real—they're not really part of our country. Well, that—once you start going down that line, then that's a dangerous thing. So that's the—probably the biggest advice that I would give, is to watch out for that.

You look at what's happening in the Middle East right now, those countries are in chaos, so many of them, because of this notion that somehow, if somebody worships God differently than you, that they're less than you. And people are slaughtered based on that idea. And they—and the countries can't grow. Businesses can't start. So of all the things to guard against, I think that's the biggest thing. Okay?

All right. Let me call on this guy because I like his jacket. [*Laughter*] That's a sharp-looking—here, hold on a second. Here. Here, we've got a microphone right behind you.

Q. Hello. Hello, Mr. President. Thank you for this opportunity. So my colleagues and my friends already asked very high and low questions.

The President. This is a middle question. [*Laughter*]

The President's Mother

Q. So I will ask you very simple, personal questions.

The President. Okay.

Q. So who is your most influential person in your life, and why? And does he or she reflect your current role? Thank you so much.

The President. That's interesting. Yes. The most influential person in my life is my—was my mother, who—she's passed away now. She died young. She died—she was a year younger than I was—I am now when she passed away. She died of cancer. But she was somebody who grew up in the middle of America in a State called Kansas. She was—my grandparents—her parents—were very ordinary middle class, working class people. They came from humble beginnings.

She—but somehow, at a very young age, she was very spirited and very adventurous. She ended up—she was White, and she married a Black man back in 1961, which is—at that time, was against the law in some places in the United States. Even though they didn't stay together, she then moved, remarried an Indonesian, and came here to Southeast Asia and, initially, was just teaching English, but over time, she became interested in how to help women in villages develop incomes. And so she spent most of her life in development work.

And she was a very kind person and a very loving person, and she believed that everybody was important. And so she would treat a very wealthy businessman the same as she'd treat a peasant farmer. And she tried to respect everybody. And she taught me that everybody has worth and everybody has a purpose. And so I think that the values that I have today—how I try to behave and how I try to treat people—is all based on those things that she taught me when I was young. And those are the same ideas and values that I try to teach to my daughters, even though they never had a chance to meet her. But I—hopefully, I've passed on some of the same things to her.

Good, okay. All right, way in the back there. Yes, you.

Q. Selamat datang, Mr. President.

The President. Selamat datang.

The President's Accomplishments

Q. My name is Wong, and I'm from Malaysia. My question for you today is, you have two terms as President. As you wrap up your term, what would you consider the best part, and what were the parts you wish you could have carried out? Thank you.

The President. Okay. The—well, the most important things I did as President were the actions I took very early on to save the economy. Because when I came into office, not only was the U.S. economy on the road to a deep depression, but the global financial system was very fragile and could have broken down had we not taken some very important steps. I'm not saying that was the most fun part, but I'm saying that was the most important part. [*Laughter*]

I think that the thing that I take the most satisfaction from is the health care law that I passed, because today, there are 17 million people who have health insurance that didn't have it before. And for—we're the only

developed—highly developed country in the world that doesn't have a universal health care system where everybody has access to health insurance. And we still don't have everybody getting health insurance, because the program that we set up, some politicians have blocked its full implementation in their States, and we have a complicated system of government. And the health care system generally, a lot of it is in the private sector, so it still leaves some people out.

But every day, I meet people who come up and say: "You saved my life because, before, I didn't have health insurance, and then you—I was able to get health insurance, and I was diagnosed with cancer. And if I hadn't been able—if I hadn't gone to a doctor, I would have never caught it in time." And so you feel good about that. And that was a—it was a hard fight. It was a big fight. And we got that done.

Since I'm an old man, as this guy says—[*laughter*]—one of the things I find is, it gives me some perspective. So the things that were hard or I didn't like, those fade in my memories. I don't think them about them as much. I don't have regrets. There are things I wish we could have gotten done.

For example, our system of immigration in America, it is broken right now. Historically, America—one of the great things about America is that we're a nation of immigrants. We—if you walk down the street in Los Angeles or New York or even in a small town in America, you don't know exactly what an American looks like. Right? An American can be African American, it can be an Irish American, it can be a Chinese American. But they're all American. And that's because we have—we're a country of people who came from everywhere. And that's been our great strength.

Right now we have a system where too many people have come, but they didn't come with the right papers. Oftentimes, it's very hard for young people who want to immigrate to get approvals. And so we tried to streamline the system, but the other party so far has been very resistant to it. I think it's the right thing to do. I think it will eventually get done. But we didn't do everything that we could.

So—but one of the things that you learn—this is what comes, the perspective of age—[*laughter*]—is that you do what you can. And you're never going to be completely satisfied with what you accomplish. And that's why you have young people, so that—[*laughter*]—we leave you something to do. [*Laughter*] Because if I had solved every problem, then you'd be bored, and you'd have no reason to be part of YSEALI. So all right?

Let's see. It's a gentleman's turn, right? This guy right here. Yes, go ahead. Yes.

The President's Management Advice

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. My name is Andendo, from Myanmar. I'm a doctor and an entrepreneur myself. Being an entrepreneur you have to wear a lot of hats at the same time. You have to do management, you have to do financial, HR. When being the President of the—one of the most powerful nations of the world, how do you know when to, like, stop yourself from juggling, and when do you know that you have to seek advice?

The President. Well, first of all, what kind of business are you trying to start or have started?

Q. It's already——

The President. Is it in the medical field?

Q. No, it's not. I call myself a multipotentialite.

The President. Okay. Well, that's a big word. [*Laughter*] What does that mean?

Q. It means that I have a lot of interests and I try to be good at everything I'm interested in.

The President. Okay, well, the—so you've already started a business though? What kind of business is it?

Q. Yes. I'm trying to create a booking website, but I'm trying to—there's a lot of mom-and-pop accommodations across Myanmar. But being, like, late in technology, a lot of them are not tech-savvy. And I want to bring them online and——

The President. Okay. So it would be a little bit like a Myanmar Airbnb.

Q. Airbnb. Yes.

The President. I've got you. Okay, that makes sense. It's a great time to try—to start businesses in Myanmar as things open up, because the potential for tourism there is really

wonderful. It's a beautiful country. And in some ways, the potential, if the development is planned, to retain the beauty and the charm of the country, it could be really powerful. So good luck.

I will say, though, that one piece of advice is, don't try to do everything—[*laughter*]—at least not all at once. I—it is true that as President I have to do a lot of things. And one of the interesting things about being President of the United States is that you're not just President of the United States. If there are problems elsewhere, people still expect you to solve them, even though they're not your country. And that's part of the leadership that—and obligation and responsibility that we have as a powerful nation.

And—but I do find that I have to focus. Because if I'm trying to know everything and manage everything, then nothing gets done. So a couple of pieces of advice. One is, you have to continually decide, what are the things that are most important and start with those. If you make a list, you have to prioritize what's the thing that has to get done; what's the thing that strategically is most important? What's the thing that will make the biggest difference if I do this well? And if you focus your attention on that, then, yes, there will be some things that don't get done, but your basic mission will be well served. You have to prioritize.

Number two, you have to delegate. One of the things that I'm pretty proud of in terms of how I manage my Presidency, but also how I managed my campaigns and past work, is I'm good at surrounding myself with really smart people. And I think the job of a leader is not to try to do everything yourself, but it's to try to organize people, each of whom have different talents and skills. Make sure that they are joined in a common vision about what needs to get done, but then go ahead and let them—give them the tools so that they can do what they need to do.

All right? It's just like a basketball team. I play basketball, so I usually use that. But it's—if you prefer soccer, that's fine. [*Laughter*] But any sporting team, the teams that are the best teams are the ones where each person has a role to play and they're all working together. But I think sometimes when you—there are a lot of managers or leaders who, they don't know how to give up control to somebody else, so they want to just do everything. And then, they get spread too thin. And the people they're working for, they never develop and never feel a sense of responsibility or ownership for the project.

And as President, I can't keep up—I can't be an expert on everything. So my most important job is to identify the talent who I have confidence in, and then I put them in charge. Now, I'll give them a sense of direction. I will hold them accountable. So I expect them to produce. If they have problems, I expect them to tell me early so that we can together solve the problem. But I want to give them a sense of empowerment. And that's how you duplicate yourself. That's how you spread the amount of things you can do, is because you—you're part of a team.

Very few things—great things are done by yourself. Maybe if you're a Picasso or Mozart, you can go off into a room, and you can produce great things. But most great accomplishments, human accomplishments, they're done as a group. And you're job as a leader then, is to be able to assemble to bring together people in a common vision.

And then, the third thing I would say is, you have to be able to be honest in evaluating what's worked and what doesn't work, and make adjustments. A lot of times, people go down one path, and even though the—they get lost and they're at a cliff, and they can't pass, but they still want to keep going forward, and sometimes, you just have to realize, you know what, this path didn't work, I've got to try something different. And so you have to be honest and constantly reevaluate and reassess what you're doing and be open, then, to new information and criticism.

That's part of the—what I was saying earlier about democracies and freedom of speech—well, that applies to any organization. If you are shutting down people from giving you suggestions or telling you what you're doing isn't working, is not smart—then, if you don't want

to hear that, then you'll just keep on making mistakes because you're not open to new information. Okay?

All right, let's see, I've got—young lady, right there. Yes. Yes. Here we go. We've got a microphone? Can we get a microphone to the young lady? Here we go, right behind you, yes.

Promoting Sustainable Products/Trade/Singapore

Q. Thank you. My name is Uma. I'm from Indonesia. I'm working in Center for Handicraft and Batik in Yogyakarta.

The President. That's a nice batik you have on.

Q. I'm wearing the skirt batik, yes. [*Inaudible*]—batik, yes.

The President. Yes, it's very nice.

Q. Thank you. So my office always supporting to small industries. You know that handicraft and batik are produced by home and small industries.

The President. Right.

Q. And now we encourage the people to use the natural dyes to color in the batik and handicraft. And also, why—the reason is because we have a lot of natural resources, and also there is the global market demand on friendly products.

The President. Yes.

Q. In other side—but in other side, unfortunately, the developed countries like Europe or, I don't know, maybe also U.S., United States, still export the unfriendly, sensitive dyes to developing countries. So my question, simple question: What do you think about this situation?

The President. Well, it's interesting. I don't know enough about, sort of, batik production. I mean, I know my mother did, but I don't—[*laughter*]—to know, sort of, the difference in the prices of dyes and what works and what doesn't. Here's what I would say, though, is you're absolutely right that in the United States, at least, people—consumers are more and more interested in environmentally friendly and organic products. And so, if you are producing things that you're using natural dyes, then that's something that you can market, and it's a selling point for a lot of consumers.

Now, the fact that countries are still selling artificial dyes into the—into Indonesia or other places, that's the way businesses work. Now, as long as they're not poisonous and they're not hurting people, you—that's not something probably that you're going to stop. But what you can do is to start marketing the fact that you use natural dyes, and that may be very appealing to people.

This brings up a larger question, which is the issue of trade. We just completed this Trans-Pacific Partnership, which brings together 12 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including a number of ASEAN countries like Malaysia and Vietnam. And trade is something that can be good and can be bad. It is good in the sense that it allows each country to pursue the things that it's best at, produce goods that are—it can do better than others, and everybody can get richer. It also can create real problems in—because it brings about competition, it can change the way things are done in each country. And if somebody from another country has a much more efficient, effective way of making a product, then the local producers can lose a lot of business, and people can be displaced from their jobs.

And we've seen this in a lot of countries. So part of, I think, the goal of every country is not to close off from trade, but if competition comes in, then the Government has to help that country adjust to this new competition and to find new ways of creating jobs and creating wealth.

And Singapore is a good example of a country that's done this very well. I mean if you think about Singapore, Singapore is a tiny, little country. It doesn't have any oil. It doesn't have any significant natural resources. But it has been very good about investing in its people, in providing them education. The Government runs itself very efficiently, and it plans—it is good in planning and thinking about, okay, if we're manufacturing this and now there's new competition and we're no longer the low-cost producer, what's the new thing we should be good at. And they help then retrain people and help companies transition into a new way of doing business.

And the truth is, is that in today's economy, countries are constantly having to change. They constantly have to transform themselves. And people constantly have to change. Because the economy is just too dynamic, it moves too fast—because of the Internet, because of transportation—you can't cut yourself off—unless you're North Korea—[*laughter*]—you can't cut yourself off from the world. And those countries that try typically fall behind, because they can't keep up with the ever-changing economic environment.

So this is where good government policy is important and helping people retrain and helping industries adapt, that's one of the most important roles of government in today's economy.

Okay, I've got—I've only got time for two more quick questions.

Q. You promised me one last town hall. [*Laughter*]

The President. I don't know about that. [*Laughter*]

Q. I'm Filipino, and you said, like, yes, I want one for Philippines, but you took the Thailand one instead. [*Laughter*]

The President. Wow! I mean, this is——

Q. I've been waiting for year now.

The President. He's—you've been waiting for a year? Well, okay, well, I—you've already taken the floor, so go ahead. [*Laughter*] The—this better be a really good question, though, since he just went ahead and announced that he's been waiting for a year to ask this question. [*Laughter*] One whole year. Okay, out there, you have a lot of pressure on you right now. Let's see how good a question it is.

[*The audience member gestured to indicate that he had two questions.*]

The President. No, you only get one. [*Laughter*] Go ahead.

Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement

Q. All right, okay, there's two questions. [*Laughter*] Sorry. Just one, okay. Okay, just one. One is—this is about American principles. And I believe, you know, I mean, you're at the end of the PP—TPPA agreement. Right? And to me, from where I'm coming from, the CSOs in Malaysia, we believe that the TPPA is a very elitist deal.

The President. What is your name?

Q. My name? Oh, sorry. My name is Cesan. I'm from Malaysia, and I'm half-Filipino, because my dad is a Filipino.

The President. So you're not actually Filipino, you're Malaysian—[*laughter*]—who presented yourself as a Filipino——

Q. But, but——

The President. ——and then insisted on asking this question.

Q. But I'm Asian.

The President. Man. All right.

Q. But I'm ASEAN. [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, just go ahead and ask your question. Go ahead.

Q. All right. So we believe that the TPPA is an elitist deal. The people has been excluded from it, even from the start. Only 5 out of 30—the clauses, or not clauses, like——

The President. Chapters

Q. ——chapters in the deal is regarding trade. I want to take you to the context of Malaysia. In Malaysia, you have indigenous people. You have 70 percent out of the poor are women. You have so much more people who are, like, lagging in behind. Okay, and so let me just check back my notes. [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, come on, man, the—this can't be too long a question, though, because I want to get one more question in. So hurry up.

Q. Okay, so, with the expectation that rising prices in medicines and major challenges in SMEs, startups, how does this tally, this deal you say that—which is inclusive on everything—at everything, how does it tally with your principles of human rights, transparency, and equality that the U.S. stands for?

The President. Okay. So the—so first of all, what is true is, is that whenever you're negotiating a trade deal—and this is true for any trade agreement—if you're negotiating with 12 countries and if there's not some space for the negotiators to basically agree on the deal, but the whole time everybody is commenting on

every aspect of it, then it would never get done. Right?

In the United States, if basically every chapter was subject to various interest groups asking, well, we want more of this, or we want more of that, and the business community saying, we want this, and the labor union saying, we want that—just in the United States, we could never get it done. And then, when you try to get 12 countries together, and everybody was in on every aspect of the negotiation, it would never be finished because people would always ask for more.

And I'm not just talking—I mean, the pharmaceutical companies would want more. The agriculture sector would want more. Everybody would want something, because the nature of a trade agreement is that there's so many interests involved, right? So what we've done instead is, you close the initial deal, right? Now it's subject to review. It's up on a website. You can go and read every chapter. And people can—each country then has to ratify it, and it's subject to the approval of the legislatures or the parliaments or whatever form of government in approving or disapproving it.

I've still got to get it passed in Congress. And Members of Congress are going to read every line, and there are going to be some people who think it's a good deal and some people who think it's a bad deal. And I believe that it's a good deal and we'll get it done. But it's—there's no guarantee. So the point is that it's inaccurate to think that transparency means that you and everybody else are all in a room together negotiating the entire time in an open environment because it would never get completed, partly because each country has to give up something in order to get a trade deal done.

For example, we have to open up some markets to goods that previously were subject to tariffs. And somebody in our country is not going to like that. And—but our view is, overall, that's good. That may be helpful to Malaysia, and in turn, we will be able to sell something to Malaysia; somebody in Malaysia won't like that. All right? So that's the nature of negotiations in a trade deal.

Now, with respect to some of the specific things that you said, I actually think it's inaccurate. So let's take the example of pharmaceuticals. No, I'm just going to give you an example. This is an area where people actually have expressed concerns because the U.S. pharmaceutical industry is the most prominent in the world. We do a lot of the research and development that invent many of the new drugs. And what is absolutely true is, is that a lot of the drugs companies, once they invent a drug, they want to keep making money as long as possible on that drug. And sometimes, they want to keep making money on that drug, even though they invented it a long time ago. They want to preserve their rights—exclusive rights to make it. And they keep selling it at a higher and higher price, and they don't want generic substitutes that are lower cost. Right?

So what we did in this deal was, we said that it's—we should provide some protections for some drugs, because if you don't provide some intellectual property protection, then nobody is going to invent a new drug. Because the minute they did, then there would be a generic that was produced right away, and there would be no point in inventing it because you wouldn't make any money. All right? The same way that if you make a—if you are a singer and you make a record, but the minute you record the record, people can just download it without paying, at a certain point, that's going to hurt the music industry, right?

So we said we have to protect some. But we are very explicit in the chapter on this to say that we have to protect generics for low-income persons, for—in fact, we need to eliminate tariffs on some things like penicillin and basic drugs that have been on the market for a very long time. And over time, we actually believe that the costs of drugs are going to go down in many countries that currently have a lot of barriers in terms of those drugs.

Now, I—and here's proof that this wasn't just some giveaway to the drug companies. Right now a lot of the drug companies in the United States are mad at me because they said, how come we didn't get more protection? And what I said to them is, well, part of our job is to

promote the U.S. drug industry, but part of our job is also to be good partners with countries that have people who are sick. And we've got to make sure that they also are able to get access to drugs.

So the point is—the point I'm making, though, generally is that in this new global environment, it's what I said earlier: Things are changing all the time. And part of my principles and my values is that we have to make sure that the change is good for ordinary people, that it's good for the farmer, it's good for the young student, it's good for women, and it's good for developing countries.

But I do not believe that we can stop change. I do not believe that, for example, if we just put up a bunch of barriers to trade, that that's going to help countries grow. I don't think that if we try to stop technology that somehow we're going to be better off. I think we have to make—we have to embrace change, but then we have to figure out how do we make sure that everybody benefits from change, not just a few.

I believe in market economies. I think it's been proven that market economies are the best generators of wealth in the world. But I think that market economies also have to have some government interventions to make sure that it's fair and there's fair competition and that small businesses are not excluded by monopolies and that workers have some basic protections.

So that's the kind of balance that is reflected in TPP. And that's reflective of, I think, my policies both in the United States and internationally.

Okay, I'm going to take one last question. Okay, now, now, let's see. Let me just—hold on a second, I'm just trying to—wait, wait, wait. I want to make sure—we've heard from the Philippines, from Myanmar, Cambodia. We haven't heard from Thailand. All right. Thailand, all right. We've got to get a Thailand question.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights/Same-Sex Marriage

Q. Thank you so much. I'm Dara from Thailand. I'm bisexual. Yes. I have a question. Should anyone being LGBT have to go to the jail? Should anyone being different police see will have to go to the jail? I didn't know for your opinion. But how could we have a regional or international cooperation if some countries are still facing the kind of problems? Thank you.

The President. Okay, that's a great question. Look, the answer to the first question is simple: no. People who have a different sexual orientation are deserving of respect and dignity like everybody else, and they shouldn't go to jail for it.

Now, the—and I know that in ASEAN countries, as well as in the United States, people have different religious traditions, they have different cultural traditions. And that's fine. What I always say to people is, is that nobody is forcing you to behave in a certain way. And nobody is saying that—for example, we just had this debate about whether same-sex couples could get married. And part of the point, I think, we made in this debate was, if a church or a mosque or a temple does not recognize those marriages, they shouldn't be forced to have to marry somebody in—that's contrary to their religious beliefs. But marriage as a civil institution by the State should be available to everybody, not just some.

And so my—so the point is that government policy should treat everybody equally under the law. That doesn't mean that we all agree on everything. That doesn't mean that people cannot have their own beliefs. But it does mean that in our public spaces, in how we interact as a society, that we have to respect people have—people's differences. And as long as their relationships, who they love, is not having any kind of negative impact on you, you should respect that.

And I just—and this goes back to—this goes back to the thing I mentioned earlier when you asked me about what can we learn from the United States. I so strongly believe that the future of humanity depends on us all treating

people with respect and dignity and recognizing that whatever your religious background, whatever your ethnicity, whether you're a man or a woman, whatever your sexual orientation, you have something in common with me; that we are both children of God, that we both were put here for a reason and are deserving of kindness and respect.

And I think that, as young leaders, if you can promote those ideas in your countries, in your businesses, in your governments, if you start—in your nonprofit organizations—if you're always thinking in terms of how do we make sure that everybody is treated fairly and everybody is deserving of respect, then there's no problem we can't solve. And as soon as we lose that sight, lose that vision, and we start treating people differently because they're different than us, and we try to make ourselves more important by putting other people down, that's when bad things happen in every society. That's a universal truth.

And we can celebrate our differences. Just like people are wearing different clothes and people have different foods, people can have different beliefs and different ideas. But the one thing that I believe is universal is that you have to treat people with respect and dignity, no matter who they are. And if you do that, YSEALI, then I'm confident you'll be successful.

All right? Thank you, everybody. It was fun to be with you. Thank you. All right.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:13 p.m. in lecture halls 21 and 22. In his remarks, he referred to Carrie Tan, founder and executive director, Daughters of Tomorrow; musicians Yunalis Mat Zara'ai and Usher T. Raymond IV; and Aisa Mijeno, cofounder and chief executive officer, SALt. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng. Participants referred to Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia; and President Benigno S. Aquino III of the Philippines.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
November 20, 2015

Prime Minister Najib. Well, first of all, I'd like to thank President Obama for visiting Malaysia once again. Not only he has corrected history—we had a hiatus of almost 50 years without a U.S. President visiting Malaysia—but he's visited us twice now. [*Laughter*] So that's a wonderful accomplishment in terms of his commitment to not only to Malaysia, but also to the region. And we are delighted at his support for the ASEAN as well as the East Asia Summit process.

We had a very good discussion on bilateral issues. As expected, we have a very similar position in terms of combating violent extremism. We both agree that we need to work closely together to make this region safer. This region is not immune from threats of violent of extremism. There are groups here operating, and there are groups here that have announced they are aligned to IS. As you know, the Malaysian Government is very clear, unequivocally, that we are against IS, against its ideology, what it stands for. It is evil. It is against Islam. It's the perversion of Islam. And they do not represent us. So we will work very closely together with the United States and other like-minded countries to make this region safer and to combat any form of violent extremism.

We've also agreed to make Malaysia as a center for—countermessaging center. Because in fighting violent extremism, it's not only a military solution that's required, but it's winning the hearts and minds of its people. And that is why it's important for us to present the counternarrative, to present the authentic Islam, the true Islam, so that people realize that what IS represents, or tries to represent, is a total perversion of Islam. So that work is important for us, and we will continue to present what we believe is a true picture of Islam.

We also talked about the TPP, which is important. We have crossed the finishing line.

I've explained to the President the domestic process. We will present to Cabinet a cost-benefit analysis next week. We will take to Parliament in January, a special session. And we hope with a support and approval of Parliament, the TPP will be ratified within 2 years or put into operation within 2 years.

We believe it will create the kind of increase in trade, investment, innovation, and set the kind of standards with respect to labor, environment, which will ensure that TPP countries be able to create more wealth, more innovation, and set new standards in terms of things like environment and labor.

We also discussed about climate change. The President and I agree that we need a deal in Paris. Malaysia is committed to work to find a deal. If necessary, we will revise our position to make sure that we do not fail in Paris. I think we owe this to the world. We cannot afford not to have a deal in Paris. And that's—I hope we will be able to find common ground so that we can find a deal can be reached in Paris.

We also talked about the South China Sea. We know that—the position of the United States, and I explained to President our position, consonant with the rule of law. And we hope that area of tension will not escalate and that we be able to find a negotiated settlement that's consonant with the principle of international law and that respects the rights of big and small nations as well.

We also talked about general developments. I explained the current situation in Malaysia. President also raised a certain of his views. And we are—we take into account some of his views, some of his concerns. But Malaysia is committed to reforms, and we are committed to ensuring, at the same time, there's peace and stability in Malaysia.

So, overall, it's been a very good meeting, and we appreciate the strengthening of the partnership with the United States on all fronts. And we will continue to work closely together.

Thank you.

President Obama. Well, it is good to be back in Malaysia. And hopefully, I've set a good example so that future Presidents won't wait another 50 years before they come back. [*Laughter*]

As I said at the town hall meeting with young people from all across ASEAN, this part of the world occupies a very special place in my heart. But I'm here as the President of the United States because ASEAN countries represent enormous growth, enormous potential, and are critical partners for the United States if we're to achieve our national security, economic, and environmental objectives.

And over the last several years, the relationship between the United States and Malaysia has strengthened on a whole variety of fronts. We have, as the Prime Minister indicated, developed a very strong relationship around counterterrorism issues. Malaysia, like Indonesia, is a majority-Muslim country that represents tolerance and peace. And as a consequence, its voice is critical in the debates that are taking place internationally around terrorism.

And Malaysia, as part of the coalition to fight ISIL, I think can be extraordinarily helpful, particularly, as the Prime Minister mentioned, in issues like countering the destructive and perverse narrative that's developed. And Malaysia's willingness to host a center that uses all the tools of social media and engagement with scholars and clerics to counter this violent narrative is extremely important and most welcome. So we look forward to working with them on that.

Malaysia is also one of the 12 countries that have joined together around TPP. And we had a good discussion about the progress that's being made, even as Malaysia debates and, hopefully, ultimately ratifies the agreement. Malaysia has already started to take some steps in reform, for example, around countering human trafficking and other issues that are embedded in the agreement. And so we will continue to work with Malaysia on that front.

We talked about the South China Sea, and this will be a major topic with all the ASEAN countries. There are a number of claimants there. The United States is not one of them, but the United States does strongly believe in the need to apply rule of law and international

norms to the resolution of maritime disputes. And ASEAN has taken a common position on that. And we look forward to working with them to ensure that those basic rules apply, because freedom of navigation and the free flow of commerce has been really the foundation stone for extraordinary development here in this region.

And as the Prime Minister discussed, we talked about the importance of civil society and issues not just in Malaysia, but in the region generally, and how we can promote those values that will encourage continued development and opportunity and prosperity. And so I very much appreciate this conversation. I think it was constructive. We thank Malaysia for the extraordinary job they've done not only as in sharing ASEAN, but also hosting the EAS summit. The East Asia Summit has become one of the premier mechanisms by which countries can coordinate on a whole range of issues. And we look forward to the participation in the summit over the next several days.

So, Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for your hospitality again, and to the people of Malaysia. Thank you so much. It's good to be back.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 8:05 p.m. in Room 406 of the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, also known as IS.

Remarks at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Business and Investment Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
November 21, 2015

Thank you so much. Please be seated. Well, good morning, and thank you for welcoming me here today.

Terrorist Attack in Bamako, Mali

Before I begin, I want to say a few words about the appalling terrorist attack in Mali. We're still learning the facts, but what we do know is that gunmen stormed a hotel in the capital of Bamako that was filled with citizens from a number of nations, many of whom were there to help the people of Mali build a lasting peace. The terrorists began ruthlessly killing people and taking hostages.

And so, on behalf of the American people, I want to extend our deepest condolences to the people of Mali and the victims' families, including at least one American. These were innocent people who had everything to live for, and they will be remembered for the joy and love that they brought to the world.

And we are grateful to all who responded and risked their own lives to save others. Malian security forces and all our own diplomatic security agents rushed in to pull people to safety. French troops and American forces who were in the country for training missions provided support, as did United Nations forces. And thanks to the swift action and skill of all involved, many people escaped and lives were saved and the terrorists were prevented from causing even more bloodshed. But I want the American people to know that we're still working to account for Americans who may have been at the hotel and to ensure the safety of all of our citizens in Mali.

Like the heinous attacks we saw in Paris and attacks we see all too often elsewhere, this is another awful reminder that the scourge of terrorism threatens so many of our nations. And once again, this barbarity only stiffens our resolve to meet this challenge. We will stand with the people of Mali as they work to rid their country of terrorists and strengthen their democracy. With allies and partners, the United States will be relentless against those who target our citizens. We will continue to root out terrorist networks. We will not allow these killers to have a safe haven.

And as I've seen throughout my trip this week, nations around the world—including countries represented here today—are united

in our determination to protect our people, to push back on the hateful ideologies that fuel this terrorism, and to stand up for the universal values of tolerance and respect for human dignity that unites us and makes us stronger than any terrorist. This is the work we must do together. This is the future that we have to build together. And that's why I'm here today.

Asia-U.S. Trade

I want to thank everyone at the ASEAN Business Advisory Council for welcoming us. Those of you here today represent the strength and diversity of all 10 ASEAN nations. And I'm pleased that we're joined by our friends from the American Malaysian Chamber of Commerce and the U.S.-ASEAN Business Council. And I especially want to thank our outstanding hosts, the Government and people of Malaysia, this year's ASEAN chair. *Terima kasih banyak.*

Now, as I've mentioned before, Southeast Asia holds a special place in my heart. As a boy, I lived in Indonesia, where for many years my mother dedicated herself to empowering rural women. And as President, I've worked to deepen America's engagement in this region. I was proud to be the first U.S. President to meet with the leaders of all 10 ASEAN countries, the first U.S. President to attend the East Asia Summit, and this visit marks my sixth meeting with ASEAN.

Now, today, ASEAN is one of the largest markets for U.S. exports, and American businesses invest more in ASEAN than any other of these regions. It's one of the reasons that, while I've been in office, we've boosted our exports across Asia by more than 50 percent, to record levels. And I congratulate all the ASEAN nations, after many years of work, on launching the new ASEAN Community. I look forward to becoming the first U.S. President to visit Laos when it hosts ASEAN next year.

Now, America's closer ties with this region are part of a larger story. When I became President, I made a strategic decision that after a decade in which the United States had focused so heavily elsewhere, especially the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, that we would rebalance our foreign policy and play a larger and long-term role here in the Asia-Pacific.

I made this decision with an appreciation of history; how the United States, as a Pacific power, has been a stabilizing presence here for seven decades. And I made it with an eye on the future, because the home of half of humanity and some of the fastest growing markets in the world, the security and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific is vital to the national interests of the United States. And deeper partnerships with our allies and partners in this region can help us meet global challenges, including terrorism.

So I've put forward a vision of the future our nations can build together: a future of mutual security and peace, where international law and norms are upheld and where disputes are resolved by dialogue and diplomacy; a future of open markets and trade that is free and fair; a future of freedom, where government is based on the will of the people, citizens are empowered by democratic governance, and the inherent dignity and human rights of all people are upheld.

In pursuit of this vision, the United States has deepened our engagement with the region across the board. We've strengthened our alliances. We've modernized our defense posture. More U.S. forces are rotating through more parts of the region for training and exercises. We've expanded our cooperation with emerging powers and economies, like Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, and India. We're working to build a constructive relationship with China, where we cooperate more where our interests align, even as we candidly confront areas of disagreement.

We've stood up for democracy, for human rights, and for development. We've called for a return to civilian rule in Thailand. And we're forging new partnerships to help educate girls and young women in Cambodia. Just yesterday I met with some extraordinary young people from our Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, more than 55,000 young innovators who are going to shape this region for decades to come. And we're going to sustain our engagement with the people of Myanmar. And

the landslide victory of Aung San Suu Kyi's National League of Democracy gives hope for a Burma that is inclusive and united, peaceful, and democratic.

In other words, even as the United States has dealt with pressing challenges in other parts of the world, our rebalance to Asia-Pacific has continued full force. And now we're ready to take the next step by moving ahead with the highest standard trade agreement in history, the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Now, four of your nations are already part of TPP: Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore, and Vietnam. Along with the United States, it also includes Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Canada, Mexico, Peru, and Chile. When implemented, it won't just boost trade and support jobs in our 12 countries, it will help set stronger rules for trade across the Asia-Pacific. And that's what I want to talk about today.

I know that the politics around trade can be hard, in all of our countries. And past agreements haven't always lived up to their promises. In recent decades, with the rise of globalization and technology, some workers, especially in developed countries, have seen their jobs exported abroad or replaced by automation. I've seen it in my home State of Illinois, as manufacturing plants shut down and jobs dried up over the last two decades. And all of this has made many people skeptical of trade agreements, despite the fact that American manufacturing has added some 900,000 new jobs in the past few years, growing for the first time in more than a decade. Meanwhile, some industries that are protected from competition by subsidies or tariffs—and the political interests that represent those industries—often resist efforts to change the status quo.

So, for all these reasons, a new trade deal like TPP can be a tough sell. But the answer is not to stop trading, to try to build barriers that close any individual country off from the global economy. It's not possible anymore. Our economies are more integrated than ever. Companies like yours rely on global supply chains. The answer is to do trade the right way, and that's what TPP does.

I've been making the case for TPP to the American people, including our Congress, where I am confident we will get approval and move forward. I know there are similar debates in TPP countries here in Asia. And as business leaders, you can make your voices heard. So I'm not going to recount all the reasons why this is such a good deal. But I would encourage you to remind people back home that this trade pact is a win for all of our countries. It's a win for our 12 TPP countries. By eliminating tens of thousands of tariffs—essentially, taxes—on goods, on each other's products, TPP removes old barriers and opens new markets.

The United States is already one of the most open economies in the world. And when the high tariffs among our TPP partners come down also, it will create new opportunities for everybody. Malaysia will be able to sell more cell phones to Mexico. Singapore can sell more medicine to Peru. Vietnam will be able to sell more leather goods to Japan. The list goes on.

TPP is a win for the United States. I'm not going to be shy about this. The—as President of the United States, I make no apologies for fighting to open markets to American companies and workers. And we've had success. U.S. exports have reached record highs, and we know that companies that export tend to grow faster, hire more employees, and pay their workers more than companies that do not export. And so, by eliminating some 18,000 tariffs that other countries put on American exports, TPP levels the playing field for our workers and businesses, which means American manufacturers will be able to sell more cars and trucks, equipment, and machinery. American farmers and ranchers will be able to sell more dairy, fruits, poultry, and beef. And there's no steak like an American steak. [*Laughter*] You agree. [*Laughter*]

The bottom line is, Americans are ready to compete. With TPP, you'll be selling more products with that label we're so proud of: Made in America.

And TPP is a win for the kind of trade that companies and workers in our countries need to compete in the 21st century. It makes sure that globalization is working for us and not

against us. For example, TPP strengthens protections for intellectual property so innovations are less likely to be stolen or pirated. It encourages more trade in services, which is a larger and larger proportion of our economies and our workforces. As the first trade agreement to truly embrace the digital economy, it encourages e-commerce. It simplifies customs, which makes it easier for all companies to export, especially small and medium-sized businesses that create many of the jobs in our countries and have more difficulty navigating through a lot of bureaucracy in trying to export to other countries.

But the message I really want to deliver today is this: TPP is more than just a trade pact, it also has important strategic and geopolitical benefits. TPP is a long-term investment in our shared security and in universal human rights. I want to be very clear: Trade is not a panacea. It's not a cure-all for the range of challenges that our nations face. But we know from experience that when trade is done right it can help fuel progress in other areas.

Let me be specific. First, TPP will help build greater trust and cooperation among nations. We've long understood that trade can help bring countries and regions closer. Take the example of the post–World War II era, where the free nations of Europe set out to bind themselves together in what would become the European Union. Over many decades, the United States helped fashion the international institutions and global trading system that have stitched our economies together and helped prevent another war between major powers. There is a link between economic security and national security, and that's at the heart of ASEAN. So TPP will help to advance the economic integration that underwrites peace and stability in this region.

Second, TPP will bind the United States even closer to some of our strongest allies in Asia. It's no coincidence that around the world many of our treaty allies are also some of our strongest trading partners. There's a virtuous circle: Our alliances are the foundation for our security, which becomes the foundation of our prosperity, which allows us to invest in the source of our strength, including our alliances. The United States has treaty obligations to the security of our allies, Japan and Australia, longstanding defense relationships with New Zealand. With greater trade and ties under the TPP, we and our allies will be investing in our mutual security for generations to come.

Third, TPP will allow the United States to forge even deeper partnerships with countries that are playing a rising role in this region. Here in Malaysia, new startups and investments in entrepreneurship have made this country a hub of innovation. Vietnam has one of the region's fastest growing economies. With greater prosperity comes greater responsibility, and both Malaysia and Vietnam are, indeed, doing more. So the United States is working with both countries to ensure maritime security, to uphold the freedom of navigation, to ensure that disputes in the region are resolved peacefully. And as they grow their economies under TPP, Malaysia and Vietnam will be able to make even greater contributions to regional security.

Fourth, TPP will allow our countries, together, to write the rules for trade in the Asia-Pacific for decades to come. Our nations are more secure and more prosperous when everybody plays by the same rules. And what are those rules? We believe that economic relationships should be based not on one country simply extracting the resources of another country, but rather, as TPP envisions, economic partnerships where we encourage innovation and investment for our mutual benefit.

We believe that economic disagreements should be resolved peacefully through dialogue, not through bullying or coercion. We believe in fair competition, which is why TPP is the first trade agreement to level the playing field between private firms and state-owned enterprises. And we believe that citizens should be able to explore new ideas and innovate, which is why TPP protects the free flow of data and information across borders and commits our nations to a free and open Internet.

In this sense, with TPP, we're not only writing the rules for trade in the Asia-Pacific, but

we also have a historic opportunity to shape the future of the global economy. Our 12 nations comprise nearly 40 percent of global GDP, about a third of global trade. And already, a growing number of nations are expressing interest in joining TPP. If a country—including other ASEAN countries—are prepared to meet its high standards, that's a conversation worth having. And even countries that never—may never join TPP will have to compete in a TPP world, giving them an incentive to raise their standards as well. So countries will have a choice: Reform and modernize or risk getting left behind. In this way, I believe TPP will help strengthen the hand of reformers far beyond our 12 initial members.

All of which means that, over time, TPP holds the promise of becoming an even more important driver of growth in the global economy. There are people back home in the United States that say America—at a time when you see more emerging powers, a more multipolar world—that is worried about American leadership. And sometimes, I have to explain that one of the ways we're already leading is in helping to shape something like the Trans-Pacific Partnership. This is a prime example of America and our partners working together to shape the world we want for future generations.

And this is particularly important when it comes to advancing human rights and universal values, which are embedded in TPP. In the past, trade agreements often have done too little in this area. And that's why we negotiated so hard for so long to get a trade pact that upholds our values. And we succeeded. TPP contains the highest trade standards ever negotiated. And with TPP, countries are already making binding commitments.

Every TPP country has responsibilities, and I'll give you some specific examples. Around the world, including in America and here in the Asia-Pacific, it's still too hard for workers to form a union and protect their rights. In some countries, it's a crime. But we know from our own history that when workers are able to come together and speak with one voice, it helps to boost wages, which improves working conditions and raises living standards. And all this progress ripples out and benefits all workers.

If workers have basic protections and decent wages, then they're better customers for your business. I believe every worker should have basic protections and rights. So it's in the text, in black and white: TPP countries commit to recognizing freedom of association and the right to collectively bargain, which means that, for the first time, a Government like Vietnam has agreed to let its workers form independent unions. And that's progress.

Around the world and here in the Asia-Pacific, we still see abuses that are abhorrent and unacceptable, where men, women, and children are sold to traffickers or tricked into forced labor. They toil, day after day, in dangerous conditions that can turn deadly. And this is not labor, this is akin to modern slavery. It has to stop. TPP helps fight this kind of forced labor with internationally recognized labor rights: prohibit—prohibitions against forced labor, against child labor, against employment discrimination, including against women.

TPP requires acceptable work conditions, such as a minimum wage, fair hours of work, and workplace safety. And meanwhile, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Brunei have committed to specific, concrete reforms to reach these high standards. Change will not happen overnight, but with TPP, hundreds of millions of workers will now be covered by higher, enforceable labor standards. That is progress.

Around the world, and here in the Asia-Pacific, the cancer of corruption is a daily indignity. Having to pay a bribe just to start a business or go to school or get a job steals money from workers and families and businesses, and it is a violation of human rights, and it is a bad strategy for development. Corruption drains billions of dollars that could be used to improve the lives of citizens. Imagine the schools and hospitals and roads and bridges that could be built with that money, investments that would make countries more competitive and more prosperous.

And that's why TPP includes the strongest anticorruption and transparency standards of

any trade agreement in history. It requires countries to have laws against corruption—including making it a crime to bribe a public official—and it requires countries to enforce those laws. So TPP encourages rule of law and stronger, more effective, and more accountable governance. That is progress.

Around the world, including in the United States, and here in the Asia-Pacific, rising economic inequality holds back economies and undermines the cohesiveness of our societies and our political systems. Globally, countless millions barely survive on 1 U.S. dollar and 25 cents a day. That's an affront to human dignity. I've made combating economic inequality and creating more opportunity for my fellow Americans a focus of my Presidency. And the world recently committed to new sustainable development goals, so that we can continue to push to eradicate the injustice of extreme poverty.

One of the best ways to do that is with economic growth that is broad based and inclusive—that lifts up the many and raises living standards—and by helping developing nations sell more of their goods to the world. That's what TPP does. It's designed to help promote development that is sustainable, that improves food security, and that reduces poverty. And that is progress.

And around the world, as well as here in the Asia-Pacific, economic progress has too often come at the expense of the environment. For too long, the myth persisted that we had to choose between the two. But facts don't lie. In the United States, we have cleaner air and cleaner water compared to decades ago, even as our economy has grown several times over. The international community took steps to repair the ozone layer even as global growth lifted millions of people from poverty into the middle class. We have proven that we can grow our economies and protect our planet. And that's why TPP includes the strongest environmental standards in history: specific provisions to combat wildlife trafficking, illegal logging that worsens deforestation, illegal fishing that endangers our oceans and our fisheries. That is progress.

The reforms and changes I've described won't happen overnight. TPP has to be adopted; it has to be implemented. Countries and companies will be adapting to these new standards and these new reforms. And it's going to take time. We're ready to partner with all of them and help them as they up their game. And this brings me to another way that TPP is different and better than many past agreements. The standards we've described—that I've described are actually enforceable. TPP has teeth, strong provisions for monitoring. And we're going to be vigilant to make sure countries fulfill their commitments. If they don't, we will take action. If a TPP country violates their responsibilities, there are consequences and real penalties. For the sake of our workers and their families and the hopes they have for the future, we've got to make sure that we're delivering on the promises that we're making today.

So the bottom line is that, as significant as it is, the Trans-Pacific Partnership represents more than just the additional goods we'll trade or even the new economic partnerships that we'll forge and the jobs it will support. TPP sends a powerful message across this region, across the Asia-Pacific. It says that America's foreign policy rebalance to the Asia-Pacific will continue on every front. It says that the United States will keep its commitments to allies and partners and that we are here to stay and that you can count on us.

And TPP says, most of all, that Americans and people across this region stand together for a shared vision of a future that is more peaceful and more secure and that upholds the universal rights of every human being.

This is about the father, the mother, the children crammed onto factory floors who deserve their dignity and humane working conditions. It's about the farmers who want to sell more of their crops and boost their incomes. It's about the workers on the assembly line who are ready to build more cars because new markets await. And it's about companies like yours, but also the small-business owner who's ready to export more products and hire more workers and the entrepreneur who believes

that her new idea could be the spark that ignites a new industry or changes the world.

That's the progress—the opportunity, the growth, the innovations—that we can unleash. That's why I'm so optimistic about our shared future, that's why I'm grateful for our work together, and that's why the nations and people of this region will always have a friend and partner in the United States of America.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:24 a.m. at the Shangri-La Hotel Kuala Lumpur. In his remarks, he referred to Abdul Hakim al-Ansari and Mu'adh al-Ansari, suspected gunmen in the terrorist attack at the Radisson Blu Bamako hotel in Bamako, Mali, on November 20; Anita Ashok Datar, senior director for field programs, Palladium Group, who was killed in the terrorist attack in Bamako; and Member of Parliament and National League for Democracy Leader Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma.

Remarks at the Dignity for Children Foundation in Kuala Lumpur
November 21, 2015

The President. Well, it is a privilege to be here at the Dignity for Children Foundation.

[*At this point, the President coughed*.]

Excuse me. I want to thank Pastor Satvinder and his wife Petrina, who've run this foundation for years with the support of private donors and the United Nations. And I want to acknowledge the Malaysian Government for its efforts to welcome and support refugees from around the world. Today, Malaysia hosts some 150,000 refugees and asylum seekers from countries as varied as Sudan, Somalia, and Myanmar.

One of the reasons that I wanted to come visit here is because globally, we're seeing an unprecedented number of refugees. The world is rightly focused on the humanitarian tragedy taking place in Syria, but we can't forget that there are millions of other refugees from war-torn parts of the world. In fact, 60 million people are displaced all around the world.

And today, as you saw, I had a chance to visit with some incredible young people, those children upstairs, many of them have gone through extraordinary hardships. They've taken really tough journeys. Most of the children that we saw in the classroom there were Rohingya, who had fled discrimination and oftentimes ethnic violence in Myanmar. And we're hopeful that with the transition in the politics of Myanmar, that the Rohingya people will begin to get treated fairly and justly in their own country. But in the meantime, the refugees from Myanmar—again, mostly Rohingya, mostly Muslim—those young children up there, they're deserving of the world's protection and the world's support.

And anybody who had a chance to see those kids, hopefully, you understood the degree to which they're just like our kids, and they deserve love and protection and stability and an education. They are lucky that they're here at this wonderful center and getting that kind of support, but there are a lot of children just like them who are not. That's the face of not only refugees from Myanmar, that's the face of Syrian children and Iraqi children and children from war-torn regions of Sudan.

And when I sat there and talked to them, and they were drawing and doing their math problems, they were indistinguishable from any child in America. And the notion that somehow we would be fearful of them, that our politics would somehow leave us to turn our sights away from their plight is not representative of the best of who we are.

I just had an incredible conversation with the young men and women around this table who represent refugees from Myanmar and Sudan and from Somalia. These are some of the bravest, hardest working individuals that you'll ever meet. They recently completed steps to settle in the United States, and each of them described how incredibly grateful they were to have this opportunity to be part of a

country that accepts people from around the world with all their diversity.

This young lady here is 16 years old, fled Myanmar on her own when she was 8 and was subject to human trafficking until the United Nations was able to help her resettle. She's now 16 and intends to be an advocate on behalf of fellow refugees in the future after she gets an education in the United States.

This is who we want to help.

Participant. Thank you so much.

The President. This is the face of people all around the world who still look to the United States as a beacon of hope. When we talk about American leadership, American leadership is us caring about people who have been forgotten or who have been discriminated against or who have been tortured or who have been subject to unspeakable violence or have been separated from families at very young ages. That's American leadership. That's when we're the shining light on the hill. Not when we respond on the basis of fear.

And if people have a chance to hear the individual stories here, you will see the degree to which they represent the opposite of terrorism and the opposite of the kind of despicable violence that we saw in Mali and in Paris. We should lift them up and give them a hand. Because the more that we are spreading our concern and our values and our hopes and dreams with young individuals like this—some of whom, even though they look very young, already have children themselves—then we're creating more and more space for good people around the world to come together and to fight the darker, more violent forces in our world.

So the good news is, is that in the face of this global crisis, more and more countries are recognizing that they need to do more. The United States is currently the world's largest donor for humanitarian aid. We have shown that we can welcome refugees and ensure our security, that there's no contradiction. And as long as I'm President, we're going to keep on stepping up and making sure that America remains, as it has always been, a place where people who, in other parts of the world, are subject to discrimination or violence, that they have in America a friend and a place of refuge.

And I'm very excited to see what the individuals sitting around this table end up doing in the United States of America, because my suspicion is, is that they're going to do great things.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:57 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Elisha and Petrina Satvinder, founders, Dignity for Children Foundation.

Remarks Prior to a Roundtable Discussion on Civil Society in Kuala Lumpur
November 21, 2015

Well, this is a great opportunity for me to meet with some outstanding, courageous men and women who represent civil society organizations here in Malaysia. And as many of you who have accompanied me on foreign trips know, one of the things that I like to do, in addition to meeting with leaders of government, is also to meet with civil society leaders and hear from them directly about the kinds of issues and challenges that they are facing.

The United States, as a matter of policy, and my administration, as a matter of policy and values, strongly believes in the promotion of civil society. And we think that when you have a strong civil society, you have a government that is more accountable, and you benefit from the ideas and views of a diverse set of citizens. Strong societies ultimately have strong civil societies.

And Malaysia, as a country that traditionally has a wide range of ethnic groups and religious faiths and a tradition of tolerance, very much benefits from the multiplicity of voices that need to be heard. This is also a country that has a Constitution and is premised on the rule of law. And many of these civil society groups, I think, are concerned about any constrictions on civil liberties and civil rights and also in

expanding the boundaries of civil society so that people here in Malaysia and around the region are able to have their voices heard.

So we very much appreciate the work that they do. Part of the reason that I want to meet with them is to send a clear message that the United States stands behind the important work that they're doing on a day-to-day basis. And in my conversations with ASEAN leaders, as is true with leaders around the globe, we'll continue to emphasize our belief that basic universal values like freedom of the press, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly—that these are all things that will make countries stronger. And given the extraordinary development and progress that Malaysia has made, this is certainly a case in point.

So I very much thank you all for taking the time to meet with me, and I look forward to hearing directly from you.

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:25 p.m. at the Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur hotel.

Joint Statement on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations-United States Strategic Partnership

November 21, 2015

We, Heads of State/Government of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United States of America, gathered in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 21 November 2015 for the 3d ASEAN-U.S. Summit. Today, we elevated our relationship to the ASEAN-U.S. Strategic Partnership to strengthen the role our relationship plays in realising this common vision of a peaceful, prosperous Asia-Pacific region that offers security, opportunity and dignity to all its citizens.

The ASEAN-United States relationship has expanded dramatically since formal relations began in 1977. The United States acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia in 2009, was the first non-ASEAN country to appoint a resident Ambassador to ASEAN in 2010, and joined the East Asia Summit in 2011. We institutionalised annual ASEAN-U.S. Summits in 2012.

We recognise that our relationship is grounded in shared principles, including the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and the ASEAN Charter. We are committed to a rules-based approach in Asia, respect for international law and the peaceful resolution of disputes. Our partnership is committed to strengthening democracy, enhancing good governance and the rule of law, promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, encouraging the promotion of tolerance and moderation, and protecting the environment.

ASEAN and the United States dedicate themselves to the ASEAN integration process and to building a strong, stable, politically cohesive, economically integrated, socially responsible, and a people-oriented, people-centred ASEAN Community, as reflected in the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and its Blueprints. In realizing these objectives, we will also work together to strengthen ASEAN connectivity and narrow the development gap, including through development cooperation.

Further we are dedicated to ASEAN Centrality in the evolving rules-based regional architecture of the Asia-Pacific. We recognise the important role we have each played, and that we have played together, in maintaining peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

Today we usher in a new era for our relationship as we come together to set a path for our future partnership with shared goals and priorities. We welcome the adoption of the Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-United States Strategic Partnership (2016–2020) to further strengthen this partnership, particularly within the five priority areas of cooperation, namely, economic integration, maritime cooperation, transnational challenges including climate change, emerging leaders and women's opportunities. We will

continue to cooperate through important ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the East Asia Summit, ASEAN Regional Forum, and ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus. We will also continue to engage through the Track 1.5 Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum.

We reaffirm the importance of maintaining peace and stability, ensuring maritime security and safety, and freedom of navigation including in and over-flight above the South China Sea. We reaffirm the collective commitments contained in the Declaration of the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) to ensure the resolution of disputes by peaceful means in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the relevant regulations, standards and recommended practices of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), without resorting to the threat or use of force and while exercising self-restraint in the conduct of activities. We support ASEAN-China on-going efforts to fully and effectively implement the DOC in its entirety, and to work toward the expeditious conclusion of an effective Code of Conduct (COC).

The ASEAN-U.S. strategic partnership will also play an increasingly prominent global role in tackling transnational challenges. We will build on existing cooperation such as the 2014 ASEAN-U.S. Joint Statement on Climate Change, and will work together to address challenging global issues such as terrorism, violent extremism, climate change, environmental degradation and pollution, energy, infectious diseases, disarmament, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, cybersecurity, trafficking in persons, illicit trafficking of wildlife and timber, and illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing.

As to economics, American firms have been the largest cumulative investors in Southeast Asia, creating millions of jobs in the United States and in ASEAN Member States, while investment in America from Southeast Asia has increased more than from any other region in the past decade. The ASEAN Economic Community will create many further opportunities for our citizens as it binds the region more closely together. Going forward, we will work towards increasing two-way trade and investment, promoting trade and investment liberalisation and facilitation, encouraging sustainable and inclusive economic growth and job creation, and deepening connectivity. We also reaffirm our Leaders' commitment to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Our people-to-people ties are more robust than ever with millions of our citizens crossing to each other's shores every year. We endeavour to continue to strengthen these linkages and cultural ties, especially among young people, as well as to promote opportunities for all our peoples, particularly the most vulnerable.

Today we dedicate ourselves anew to bringing security and opportunity to our peoples and addressing emerging regional and global challenges in the continued promotion of a peaceful, stable, integrated, and prosperous Asia-Pacific community.

Adopted in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on the Twenty-First Day of November of the Year Two Thousand and Fifteen.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Association of Southeast Asian Nations Leaders in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
November 21, 2015

Thank you very much, Prime Minister Najib, and thank you to my fellow leaders for being here today. I am very proud that this is my sixth meeting with ASEAN. As President, I've deepened America's cooperation with ASEAN because a united, integrated, and effective

ASEAN in the center of Asia is a force of stability, prosperity, and peace.

As the Prime Minister mentioned, I'm pleased today that we're elevating our relationship to a new level: a strategic partnership to guide and strengthen our ties for decades to come, including in maritime cooperation. The United States and ASEAN will be closer than ever.

ASEAN plays a vital role in advancing a rules-based order for the Asia-Pacific. I commend ASEAN for working to ensure that all nations uphold international law and norms, including the peaceful resolution of disputes, freedom of navigation, and freedom of overflight. And I applaud ASEAN for working to create a Code of Conduct for the South China Sea. For the sake of regional stability, claimants should halt reclamation, new construction, and militarization of disputed areas.

I also congratulate my fellow leaders on the formation of the ASEAN Community, which is another major step toward integrating economies and greater regional stability. And as the Prime Minister noted, we are already a major investor in ASEAN. We do an enormous amount of trade. You will continue to have the support and partnership of the United States.

And I expect that we'll also have an opportunity to discuss the urgency of confronting climate change. ASEAN, like the rest of the Asia-Pacific, is increasingly feeling the effects of warmer temperatures. Almost all the countries here today have submitted their post-2020 climate targets. So, working together, I believe we can achieve an ambitious and durable climate agreement in Paris.

We'll have time to discuss, hopefully, some other issues: educational and scientific exchanges, the work that we are doing to counter violent extremism and terrorists. But our partnership I think has grown stronger throughout these meetings, and I'm looking forward to a very productive session again here in Kuala Lumpur.

Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:10 p.m. at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
November 22, 2015

President Obama. Well, it's a great pleasure to spend some time with Prime Minister Lee and the delegation from Singapore. As Singapore celebrates 50 years and as the relationship between the United States and Singapore moves into its 50th year, it is wonderful to report that the state of our bilateral relationship is very, very strong.

I think, around the world, people admire the incredible progress that Singapore has made in creating prosperity and opportunity for its people and for being an excellent international partner. And here at ASEAN and previously at APEC, I think we've seen that although Singapore does not have a large population, it punches above its weight because of its wise policies and ability to work with all countries.

Prime Minister Lee and I had an opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues, many of them that were echoed during the EAS summit. We expressed concern about the work we need to do together to counter ISIL and to continue to improve our intelligence and counterterrorism efforts.

We talked about the South China Sea and the importance of upholding the basic principles and norms that have underwritten prosperity and stability in this region for many, many years. We are two of the countries that helped to get TPP over the finish line, and we are both excited about the prospects for creation of jobs and new businesses and new opportunity in both our countries. And we discussed a wide range of multilateral issues, such

as climate change, that are going to require the support of large countries and small if we're going to be able to succeed.

So I want to thank the Prime Minister for the excellent cooperation that we have between our two countries. We're looking to build on it in the future. And as Prime Minister Lee mentioned before the press walked in, one of my goals as President has been to show the consistent engagement of the United States in this region, and it's made much easier when we know we've got outstanding partners like Singapore.

So thank you very much.

Prime Minister Lee. Well, I thank President Obama for making time for this meeting with my delegation. We discussed what President Obama has described to you. But what—the point which I made to the President was that the countries in this region all appreciate America's engagement and participation in the region, its contribution economically, and security issues in terms of the overall strategic balance.

And what matters most to the countries is to know that this will be maintained. The President himself has made six trips to this region, every year attending the ASEAN meeting. And that's greatly appreciated. And it's important to know that this will continue beyond November 2016. The President said, well, that depends who wins the next election. But whoever wins the next election, America has interests in this region, which are enduring and which are worthy of attention and focus to advance them and to continue to be a constructive and strategic player in Asia for many years to come.

President Obama. Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Lee. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Obama. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:56 p.m. at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

The President's News Conference in Kuala Lumpur
November 22, 2015

The President. Good afternoon, everybody. Let me begin by once again thanking the Government and the people of Malaysia for hosting us at the U.S.-ASEAN and East Asia Summits. These gatherings are enormous undertakings, but thanks to Malaysia's leadership and incredible hospitality, they have been a great success.

Earlier this week, as I headed to this region, there was a headline in one of our publications back home that asked: "Obama's Asian Distraction?"—question mark. And the premise seemed to be that this region was somehow disconnected from pressing global events. I could not disagree more. This region is not a distraction from the world's central challenges, like terrorism. The Asia-Pacific is absolutely critical to promoting security, prosperity, and human dignity around the world. That's why I've devoted so much of my foreign policy to deepening America's engagement with this region. And I'm pleased that on this trip we made progress across the board.

With my fellow leaders from Japan, Australia, and the Philippines, I reaffirmed that our treaty alliances remain the foundation of regional security. The United States is boosting our support for the Philippines' maritime capabilities and those of our regional partners. At the U.S.-ASEAN and East Asia Summits, a key topic was the South China Sea, and many leaders spoke about the need to uphold international principles, including the freedom of navigation and overflight and the peaceful resolution of disputes. And to make sure we keep deepening our partnership here in Southeast Asia, I invited all 10 ASEAN leaders to the United States next year. I'm pleased they accepted, and I look forward to continuing our work.

On the economic front, we worked with our APEC partners to advance a regional economic

order where all nations play by the same set of rules. Based on my meeting with our Trans-Pacific Partnership countries, I am optimistic that our 12 nations will approve this pact and that we can increasingly focus on implementing it.

APEC joined the G–20 in sending an unequivocal message that we need to reach an ambitious climate change agreement in Paris. I also want to note the landmark step we took this week with more than 30 other nations at the OECD to dramatically reduce subsidies for coal-fired power plants around the world, which is an important way to advance the fight against climate change.

Of course, given the events of this week, much of my work here in Asia focused on the urgent threat of terrorism. Today, families in too many nations are grieving the senseless loss of their loved ones in the attacks in France and in Mali. As Americans, we remember Nohemi Gonzalez, who was just 23 years old, a design major from California State University. She was in Paris to pursue her dream of designing innovations that would improve the lives of people around the world. And we remember Anita Datar of Maryland. She's a veteran of the Peace Corps, a mother to her young son, who devoted her life to helping the world's poor, including women and girls in Mali, and lift themselves up with health and education.

Nohemi and Anita embodied the values of service and compassion that no terrorist can extinguish. Their legacy will endure in the family and friends who carry on their work. They remind me of my daughters or my mother, who, on the one hand, had their whole life ahead of them, and on the other hand, had devoted their lives to helping other people. And it is worth us remembering when we look at the statistics that there are beautiful, wonderful lives behind the terrible death tolls that we see in these places.

Now, over the years, our friends here in Asia have been victims of terrorism, and many of them are close counterterrorism partners with us. So my time here has also been an opportunity to work with many of our partners in the Asia-Pacific that are members of our coalition against ISIL: Australia, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan.

Which brings me to the point I want to emphasize today. For more than a year, the United States has built and led a broad coalition against ISIL of some 65 nations. Given the frequent focus on America's leadership of this campaign, sometimes, the contributions of our partners are overlooked. In fact, since the G–20, a number of our coalition members have stepped up with new commitments. So today I want to take a moment to recognize how our allies and partners help advance every element of our strategy.

Nearly two dozen nations—among them Turkey and our Arab partners—contribute in some way to the military campaign, which has taken more than 8,000 strikes against ISIL so far. And as I've said, we're ready to welcome or cooperate with other countries that are determined to truly fight ISIL as well. Fifteen countries have deployed personnel to train and support local forces in Iraq. The United Arab Emirates and Germany are organizing 25 coalition partners in helping to stabilize areas in Iraq liberated from ISIL. Italy is coordinating the multinational effort to train Iraqi police.

On the political front, U.S. leadership brought all the key countries together in Vienna to discuss a common understanding on the principles for ending the Syrian civil war. On the humanitarian front, the United States is helping to lead the effort to mobilize more aid for the Syrian people, including refugees.

More than 40 countries have now passed or strengthened laws to prevent the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, and 34 nations, including the United States, have arrested foreign terrorist fighters. Saudi Arabia is helping to coordinate the crackdown on ISIL financing. The United Arab Emirates' new messaging center is working to discredit ISIL's propaganda, and Malaysia just announced the creation of its own center to do the same. And by joining our summit at the United Nations that we organized this fall, more than 100 nations, more than 20 multilateral institutions, and some 120 civil society groups—including many leaders from Muslim communities around the world—have

become part of a global movement against ISIL and its twisted ideology.

All of which is to say that our coalition will not relent. We will not accept the idea that terrorist assaults on restaurants and theaters and hotels are the new normal or that we are powerless to stop them. After all, that's precisely what terrorists like ISIL want, because, ultimately, that's the only way that they can win. That's the nature of terrorism: They can't beat us on the battlefield, so they try to terrorize us into being afraid, into changing our patterns of behavior, into panicking, into abandoning our allies and partners, into retreating from the world. And as President, I will not let that happen.

In our diverse societies, everybody can do their part. And we will not give in to fear or start turning on each other or treating some people differently because of religion or race or background. That wouldn't just be a betrayal of our values, it would also feed ISIL's propaganda: their assertion—which is absolutely false, that we must absolutely reject—that we are somehow at war with an entire religion. The United States could never be at war with any religion because America is made up of multiple religions. We're strengthened by people from every religion, including Muslim Americans.

So I want to be as clear as I can on this: Prejudice and discrimination helps ISIL and undermines our national security. And so, even as we destroy ISIL on the battlefield—and we will destroy them—we will take back land that they are currently in. We will cut off their financing. We will hunt down their leadership. We will dismantle their networks and their supply lines, and we will ultimately destroy them. Even as we are in the process of doing that, we want to make sure that we don't lose our own values and our own principles. And we can all do our part by upholding the values of tolerance and diversity and equality that help keep America strong.

The United States will continue to lead this global coalition. We are intensifying our strategy on all fronts, with local partners on the ground. We are going to keep on rolling back ISIL in Iraq and in Syria and take out more of their leaders and commanders so that they do not threaten us. And we will destroy this terrorist organization.

And we'll keep working with our allies and partners for the opportunity and justice that helps defeat violent extremism. We'll keep standing up for the human rights and dignity of all people, because that is contrary to what these terrorists believe. That's part of how we defeat them. And I'm confident we will succeed. The hateful vision of an organization like ISIL is no match for the strength of nations and people around the world who are united to live in security and peace and in harmony.

So, with that, I'm going to take a couple of questions. We'll start with Angela Greiling-Keane of Bloomberg. Yes.

Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/Russia/Syria

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You're scheduled to meet this week with President Hollande in Washington to talk about stepping up efforts against ISIL even further. Given that Russia would be part of the coalition that France proposes, have you seen any signs in the past couple days of Russia redirecting its military efforts in Syria to actually focus on ISIL? Are you—are there any circumstances that you could see President Asad remaining in power, even if only temporarily, if that's what it took to effectively have a broad alliance directed at ISIL?

And finally, as you've said, the U.S. won't work with Russia if their goal is to keep Asad in power. If that's the case, is defeating ISIL or destroying ISIL a realistic goal?

The President. Well, first of all, destroying ISIL is not only a realistic goal, we're going to get it done, and we're going to pursue it with every aspect of American power and with all the coalition partners that we've assembled. It's going to get done.

It will be helpful if Russia directs its focus on ISIL, and I do think that as a consequence of ISIL claiming responsibility for bringing down their plane, there is an increasing awareness on the part of President Putin that ISIL

poses a greater threat to them than anything else in the region. The question at this point is whether they can make the strategic adjustment that allows them to be effective partners with us and the other 65 countries who are already part of the counter-ISIL campaign. And we don't know that yet.

So far, over the last several weeks, when they started taking strikes in Syria, their principal targets have been the moderate opposition that they felt threatened Asad. Their principal goal appeared to be—if you follow the strikes that they took—to fortify the position of the Asad regime. And that does not add to our efforts against ISIL. In some ways, it strengthens it, because ISIL is also fighting many of those groups that the Russians were hitting.

When we were in Turkey, I discussed with President Putin, in a brief pull-aside, his need to recognize that he needs to go after the people who killed Russian citizens. And those aren't the groups that they were currently hitting with strikes. So they're going to have to make an adjustment in terms of what they're prioritizing.

More broadly—I've said this before; I said it to President Putin 5 years ago, and I repeated it to him just a few days ago—the issue with Asad is not simply the way that he has treated his people. It's not just a human rights issue. It's not just a question of supporting somebody who has been ruthlessly dropping bombs on his own civilian populations. As a practical matter, it is not conceivable that Mr. Asad can regain legitimacy in a country in which a large majority of that country despises Asad and will not stop fighting so long as he's in power, which means that the civil war perpetuates itself.

And so the goal in Vienna is to see if—with all the countries around the table, including Saudi Arabia and Turkey and Iran and Russia, as well as the United States and other countries that have concerns about this—whether we can arrive at a political transition process that recognizes the need for a new government and can quell the fighting, bring about a ceasefire, and allows all of us to refocus our attention on this barbaric organization that is killing so many people.

Russia has not officially committed to a transition of Asad moving out, but they did agree to the political transition process. And I think we'll find out over the next several weeks whether or not we can bring about that change of perspective with the Russians.

Keep in mind that we all have an interest in maintaining a Syrian state, because we don't want complete chaos. I mean, and there are problems that we've seen in, for example, Lebanon, when the machinery of state entirely breaks down. So there—there's going to be a need for the international community and the United Nations to work in order to maintain a Syria—maintaining a Syrian state and be able to move forward with a political transition that's orderly. And that's going to be difficult, but that's what we have to focus on.

In terms of the position of the United States and the other 65 members of the coalition, my view on Asad is, it will not work to keep him in power. We can't stop the fighting. Even if I were to cynically say that my priority is ISIL and not removing Asad regardless of the terrible things that he's done to his people, the United States could not stop the fighting in Syria by those who are opposed to Asad's rule. And so this is a practical issue, not just a matter of conscience. And I think that there are a large number of members of this coalition, including President Hollande, who agree with me on that. Okay?

Michael Shear [New York Times].

Department of Defense Intelligence on the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/U.N. Climate Change Conference/Terrorism

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. On a different topic, when you go to Paris next week for the climate talks, you do so in the shadow of what happened in that city a week ago. Could you talk a little bit about how you think those terror attacks might affect the talks? And substantively, on the talks, can you talk a little bit about concerns that the United States might not have the ability to convince poor countries that they

will—that the nations will help them pay for what they need to do to achieve the climate talks, given especially the Republican opposition back home?

And on one separate matter, could you comment on the investigations that we reported about in our paper this morning into whether or not intelligence officials are altering the assessments of the ISIL campaign to make them seem more rosy?

The President. Okay. I'll take the last question first. One of the things I insisted on the day I walked into the Oval Office was that I don't want intelligence shaded by politics. I don't want it shaded by the desire to tell a feel-good story. We can't make good policy unless we've got good, accurate, hard-headed, clear-eyed intelligence. I believe that the Department of Defense and all those who head up our intelligence agencies understand that and that I have made it repeatedly clear to all my top national security advisers that I never want them to hold back, even if the intelligence or their opinions about the intelligence, their analysis or interpretations of the data, contradict current policy. So that's a message that we've been adamant about from the start.

I don't know what we'll discover with respect to what was going on at CENTCOM. I think that's something that's best left to the IG and the processes. I have communicated once again to both the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs as well as Secretary Carter that I expect that we get to the bottom of whether or not what you describe has been happening.

There are always going to be some disputes with respect to how to interpret facts on the ground. I get intelligence briefings every single day, and there are times where they're making their best judgments. They're—they'll say, with moderate confidence or low confidence or high confidence, this is what we think is happening. There may be times where there are disputes internally among various intelligence agencies about that. But I don't know the details of this. What I do know is my expectation, which is the highest fidelity to facts, data, the truth.

And if there are disagreements in terms of how folks are interpreting the facts, then that should be reflected in the reports that we receive: that some folks think this is going on; other folks thinks that's going on. And that's part of what I weigh in terms of making decisions.

One last thing I'll say though: As a consumer of this intelligence, it's not as if I've been receiving wonderfully rosy, glowing portraits of what's been happening in Iraq and Syria over the last year and a half. So, to the extent that it's been shaded—again, I don't know the details of what's—the IG may discover—but it feels to me like, at my level at least, we've had a pretty clear-eyed, sober assessment of where we've made real progress and where we have not.

On Paris, a lot of the discussion out here both at the G–20, APEC, and finally here at ASEAN, has been that we've got to get a strong Paris deal. And I'm optimistic that we can. A hundred and sixty countries have now put forward their national targets for how they can reduce emissions; that accounts for about 90 percent of the world's emitters.

And the key to a strong agreement is going to be that, although there's going to be differentiation between countries—the United States doesn't expect that our obligations are identical to Laos, for example, given our levels of development, how much carbon we emit compared to theirs—that everybody does have a plan, that everybody is accountable to a single set of reporting requirements, that there's transparency about what each country is doing, that once we've set that architecture in place, in 5 years' time, we can review what we've done, turn up the dials in light of additional information and additional technology. In some cases, we may make progress faster than we expected, and we can increase our targets. So the key is to make sure that everybody is doing their part.

You raise one important issue, and that is climate finance. There are going to be a number of countries who recognize the threat of climate change, want to do something about it, but they also have large populations suffering

from extreme poverty, who don't have electricity, who don't have the ability to feed their families. And any leader of those countries has to ask themselves, am I going to be sacrificing development and poverty alleviation in order to deal with climate change, particularly since a lot of more developed countries are responsible for at least the current carbon emissions that are causing climate change?

And so the answer to that, we all—we've all agreed, is a finance mechanism to help these countries adapt—in some cases, leapfrog old technologies so that instead of building old, dirty power plants, here are some smart, clean energy plants. And we'll help you through technology transfer and financing so that you can achieve your development goals, but not add to the carbon problem.

So far, with a target of $100 billion, we've reached between private and public sources $62 billion, and that target did not need to be met until 2020, based on our original commitments. So we're all on—we're well on our way to meeting these commitments. And it's a smart investment for us to make.

Sometimes, back home, critics will argue, there's no point in us doing something about getting our house in order when it comes to climate change because other countries won't do anything and it will just mean that we're in a less competitive position. Well, when I met with President Xi and China signed on to an aggressive commitment, that took a major argument away from those critics. We now have the two largest emitters signed on. And it makes sense for us and the Chinese and the Europeans and others to help these countries, because, ultimately, if a country like India, for example, with over a billion people, is a major polluter, that's going to affect all of us. If on the other hand, they're developing and growing in a clean way, that's going to be good for all of us. All right?

I guess you wanted to know how the atmosphere, as a consequence of the attack in Paris, would affect it. Look, I think it is absolutely vital for every country, every leader to send a signal that the viciousness of a handful of killers does not stop the world from doing vital business, and that Paris—one of the most beautiful, enticing cities in the world—is not going to be cowered by the violent, demented actions of a few.

And that—that's part of the overall message that I want to very clearly send the American people. We do not succumb to fear. That's the primary power that these terrorists have over us. They cannot strike a mortal blow against the United States or against France or against a country like Malaysia. But they can make people fearful. And that's understandable, because that could have been us, that could have been our families, that could have been our children in these places. And our hearts are broken when we see these images.

But in addition to hunting down terrorists, in addition to effective intelligence, and in addition to missile strikes, and in addition to cutting off financing and all the other things that we're doing, the most powerful tool we have to fight ISIL is to say that we're not afraid; to not elevate them, to somehow buy into their fantasy that they're doing something important. They're a bunch of killers. And there have been people throughout human history who can find an excuse to kill people because they don't think like them or look like them. And we fight them, and we beat them, and we don't change our institutions and our culture and our values because of them.

I want to be very clear about this. I am not afraid that ISIL will beat us because of their operations. When I see a headline that says this individual who designed this plot in Paris is a mastermind—he's not a mastermind, it's a—he found a few other vicious people, got hands on some fairly conventional weapons, and sadly, it turns out that if you're willing to die, you can kill a lot of people.

And so it is in our capacity to roll up those networks. Now, we've got to take precautions, we have to take it seriously, and we have to go at the heart of the problem that exists inside of Syria and Iraq right now. And we have to address the broader issues that exist in a tiny fraction of the Muslim community. But it is a real problem that leaders from Prime Minister Najib to the President of Indonesia and others

who have large Muslim populations acknowledge. A country like Indonesia has 250 million people; if just a tiny fraction of those are in some ways attracted by a vicious ideology like ISIL's, then that's a real problem for us. And so tools like countering this narrative and Muslim clerics and political leaders and community leaders coming forward and making sure that our children are not being fed this kind of bile, that's critically important as well.

But in all of this, we cannot respond from fear. And the American people, in the past, have confronted some very real, enormous threats, and we beat them. We vanquished them. This will be no different.

Kevin Corke [Fox News].

U.S. Military's Rules of Engagement in Counter-ISIL Campaign/Immigration Reform/Sex Trafficking

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I wanted to ask you about what Secretary Carter said about expanding the rules of engagement versus ISIS. What was that conversation like? And what did he mean by that?

And I'd like to ask you also about immigration. The High Court is looking into executive action on immigration, as you know. And I understand the sensitivity of it; you don't want to be prejudicial. But I'm curious, are you where you thought you'd be in immigration reform? And what would you say to family members who say: "Listen, we did it the right way, we've waited our turn in line. How do these other guys get to skip the line, if you will?"

And lastly, the Attorney General announced eight indictments of individuals in the U.S. and Mexico on sex trafficking and related charges. Where is the fight against sex trafficking among the priorities for your administration? Are you where you thought you'd be on that?

Thank you, sir.

The President. Okay. Kevin, you asked all those questions so nicely, but if everybody is asking three questions, we're not going to get home. [*Laughter*] So let me see if I can go through these very quickly.

With respect to rules of engagement, we are in a constant conversation inside the Situation Room about how do we apply force most effectively to go after key ISIL targets, key ISIL leaders, strategic positions, their infrastructure, their supply lines, while minimizing civilian casualties. We do so for two reasons. One, because it's the right thing to do. There are people who are caught up in Mosul right now, for example, who despise ISIL, who are essentially captive to ISIL, are being brutalized by ISIL. And to the extent that we can avoid them being killed by those of us who are trying to defeat ISIL, that's a legitimate concern in any military campaign. Because if we're not careful about it—and this brings us to the practical element of it—then you can alienate the very populations that you need to win over, because ultimately, those are the folks who are going to have to drive ISIL out, stomp it out all the way.

The good news is, is the U.S. military has become very good at this. I think that there have been some circumstances where the military proceeds in steps and are continually re-evaluating whether, well, maybe this is a situation where we can, in fact, take the strike without a lot of civilian casualties.

A good example with the recent trucks that were struck. There may be ways in which warnings can be given to the drivers—many of whom may not work for ISIL, they may just be for hire or being forced into it—so that they'd better abandon those trucks before we shoot them down, because we're shooting them down. So that's the kind of conversation, and that's been ongoing throughout the process.

With respect to immigration reform, I can't comment on the ins and outs of the legal case. I've said before, and I'll say again: I am confident that the rules and executive action that I put forward are squarely within the category of prosecutorial discretion that historically has been under a President's power. And you've got lower courts who have disagreed, but we think that past precedent is on our side.

Substantively, I've got 11 million people in our countries, many of whom are working, paying taxes, our neighbors, coworkers, friends who have lived here for a very long—who have lived in the United States for a very long time. We're not going to deport them, despite what

some political leaders may say. It would be contrary to who we are, would be too costly, is too impractical. What we want to do is allow them to get out of the shadows and to get right with the law, pay a fine, go to the back of the line, but hopefully, over time, be contributors to society.

Of course, none of this would be necessary if we just passed the legislation that was passed in the Senate with a bipartisan majority. And I continue to believe that the ultimate solution is going to be one that comes from Congress. And although, during this political season, it may be difficult for Republican leaders in either the House or in the Senate to resuscitate that legislation, my hope is, is that after the election, they will. And in the interim, I'm going to do everything I can to sensibly apply our immigration laws in a way that is reflective of the fact that we're a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants.

And just very briefly, with respect to sex trafficking: This is a critical problem; we take it very seriously. We have entire divisions in our law enforcement agencies that are dedicated to this. I've elevated this within the White House so that we have people focusing specifically on ending trafficking. And in our international discussions—most specifically, out here in Southeast Asia—we are working very closely to promote mechanisms that will end trafficking.

In fact, TPP, one of the central mechanisms in TPP, to ensure high labor standards and human rights and human dignity, are requirements among the members who are signatories to have in place real, serious, enforceable ways to prevent the kind of human trafficking that causes such hardship and brutality for so many people.

And those of you who were with me when I visited the refugee center yesterday will recall the lovely young 16-year-old who was sitting next to me. She's somebody who had been victim of trafficking. And it reminds you of the terrible toll that is often placed on children, people who are the most vulnerable, people who are least able to protect themselves. And every country has an obligation to put an end to it.

Dave Nakamura [Washington Post].

Terrorism

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You said moments ago that Americans should not give in to fear when it comes to these terrorist attacks. But you also said that the person who may have been the person behind thinking about the attacks is not a mastermind and that anybody who can get their hands on some conventional weapons can—and is willing to die can blow themselves up. How should Americans feel, then, if they shouldn't be scared?

And if I may, the Washington Post and ABC News just this week came out with a poll that said 83 percent of the voting public believes that an attack, a terrorist attack on—against the U.S. with mass casualties is likely to happen in the near future, and 40 percent say it's very likely. Does that in your mind—given the fact that you think the public should not be so fearful—mean that the terrorists are winning? And do you believe that this is sort of the new normal and Americans will have to live with this kind of fear?

The President. David, I think that the American people are in—are right to be concerned, and to expect that we in the Government and in law enforcement are doing everything we can to disrupt terrorist attacks, to intercept intelligence that may lead us to individuals who are willing to carry out these attacks, that we make sure that these terrorists are not gaining the kinds of weaponry that would make it easier for them to cause mass attacks. This is a serious problem. And as somebody who, more often than I would like, have met with or comforted families of victims of terrorism, the losses are real, and they're devastating. So this is a serious problem. And we have to work collectively across the board, as we've been doing since I became President and since previous administrations identified the kinds of organized terrorist activity like Al Qaida that we've seen—we've got to do everything we can to stop it.

But there is a difference between being vigilant and being concerned and taking this seriously and taking precautions and, in some cas-

es, changing our security arrangements, as we've done, for example, in aviation. There's a difference between smart applications of law enforcement and military and intelligence and succumbing to the kind of fear that leads us to abandon our values, to abandon how we live, to abandon—or change how we treat each other.

And the good news is, there, Americans actually have been resilient. They've been tested. We had a mass casualty attack on 9/11. And as I said before, I was very proud of the fact that the fundamental nature of America and how we treated each other did not change.

I think we made some bad decisions subsequent to that attack in part based on fear, and that's why we have to be cautious about it. We have to think things through. But overall, the American people went about their lives. Times Square is filled with people—rightly so. After the Boston bombing attack, folks went right back to the ballpark and sang, "Take Me Out to the Ballgame." That's what they needed to do.

And so the message I have is that those of us who are charged with protecting the American people are going to do everything we can to destroy this particular network. Once this network is destroyed—and it will be—there may be others that pop up in different parts of the world, and so we're going to have to continue to take seriously how we maintain the infrastructure that we've built to prevent this. But it doesn't have to change the fundamental trajectory of the American people. And that we should feel confident about.

And the media needs to help in this. I mean, I just want to say, I—during the course of this week, a very difficult week, it is understandable that this has been a primary focus. But one of the things that has to happen is, how we report on this has to maintain perspective and not empower in any way these terrorist organizations or elevate them in ways that make it easier for them to recruit or make them stronger.

They're a bunch of killers with good social media. And they are dangerous, and they've caused great hardship to people. But the overwhelming majority of people who go about their business every day, the Americans who are building things and making things and teaching and saving lives as firefighters and as police officers and—they're stronger. Our way of life is stronger. We have more to offer. We represent 99.9 percent of humanity. And that's why we should be confident that we'll win.

Colleen McCain Nelson [Wall Street Journal].

U.S. Policy on Refugees/Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia/Transparency and Accountability in Government

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You've threatened to veto the bill the House passed that would tighten screening procedures for Syrian refugees, but you've left the door open to more—legislation that is more constructive in the White House's view.

The President. Yes.

Q. What specific changes to your refugee program would you support? And do you think that Democrats who are calling for a halt to your program are betraying our country's values, as you've suggested of some Republicans?

And one last thing—I'm sorry—separately. [*Laughter*] Not a four-part question.

The President. Just a two-parter.

Q. Right.

The President. Okay, go ahead.

Q. You met Friday with Prime Minister Najib, who is facing allegations of corruption and human rights violations. And you'd said at your town hall event that you would raise those issues with him when you spoke privately. What was your message to Najib about the investments funds scandal and also about the issue of jailing his political opponents?

The President. Okay. With respect to the refugee program, Paris just happened a week ago. News moves so fast these days that sometimes we just lose track. It's been so recent and so pervasive in the news, and people have, understandably, been so concerned given how similar Paris is to many American cities, that I get why legislation in the House moved forward quickly.

My hope, though, is, is that now that we've got some time to catch our breath and take a look at this carefully, people understand that refugees who end up in the United States are

the most vetted, scrutinized, thoroughly investigated individuals that ever arrive on American shores; that the process that's been constructed over the course of several administrations on a bipartisan basis is extraordinarily thorough and currently takes between 18 to 24 months for somebody to be approved.

And so, although on its face the House legislation simply says, well, we can just certify, and this isn't—not along the lines of some of the more radical proposals that we were hearing earlier in the week from some Presidential candidates—the fact of the matter is, is that if it gums up the works so much, then effectively, you don't end up seeing any refugees admitted. If you layer it with more and more bureaucracy that doesn't actually make us safer, because it doesn't do a better job of screening, but simply makes it almost impossible to process individuals who are coming in, then you're effectively ending the refugee program for people who desperately need it.

And when I referred to a betrayal of our values, I was being very specific about some of the commentary that was made that would suggest, for example, that we might let Christians in but not Muslims; that we—somehow we're so fearful that a 4-year-old orphan might not be let in. And those of you who joined me to the refugee center yesterday and you saw those kids, that's who we're talking about. If you are a parent and you saw those kids, and you thought about what they had gone through, the notion that we couldn't find a home for them anywhere in the United States of America, it—that is contrary to our values.

And the good news is, is that the overwhelming majority of the people who know that we are screening and all the precautions that are already taken, if they saw those kids, they'd say, yes, we need to do right by those children.

So, with respect to Prime Minister Najib, I don't comment on investigations happening back in the United States; I certainly am not going to comment on any investigations or legal proceedings that may be taking place in a foreign country where I'm a visitor. But I did raise with Prime Minister Najib—as I have with many of the leaders here in Southeast Asia, but also many leaders in Africa and Latin America and everywhere we go—the importance of transparency, accountability, the importance of rooting out corruption, all of which are impediments to development, all of which hold countries back, all of which contribute to poverty and stunted growth.

And if countries solve those problems, even if they are resource poor and landlocked, they will do better. And if they don't solve those problems, it doesn't matter how much they're blessed by natural resources or size or geography, they're going to fail.

And I also emphasized to Prime Minister Najib the importance of civil society and a free press in countries thriving. And every country here is at different levels and stages of development, both social and economic, and we don't expect that everybody follows the same path that the United States does. But I do think there are some basic principles that are important for us to uphold as friends and partners to the countries that we're talking to.

The good news is, is that—take a country like Myanmar that just went through a historic election after having been subject for 40 years to military rule. They're not going to immediately be Sweden in terms of their democratic practices, but there is a sea change taking place there, and we want to encourage that and engage it.

And a lot of the work that we do—the Open Government Partnership that we set up through the United Nations, the bilateral work we do in terms of improving transparency, the principles and rules that we've embedded in TPP—all those things are designed to raise the bar, to have people set sights that are a little bit higher. And some will go forward, some will slip back. Paces will vary, but the trajectory is the same, and that is a world where ordinary people are treated fairly, there's rule of law, there's transparency, governments are accountable, people's voices are heard, women are treated equally, minorities are not discriminated against.

Those are profoundly American values, but I also think they are universal values.

All right. Thank you, everybody. Let's go home.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 2:34 p.m. at the Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur hotel. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan; Prime Minister Malcolm B. Turnbull of Australia; Prime Minister Benigno S. Aquino III of the Philippines; Rohan Datar, son of Anita Ashok Datar, senior director for field programs, Palladium Group, who was killed in the terrorist attack at the Radisson Blu Bamako hotel in Bamako, Mali, on November 20; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; President Bashar al-Asad of Syria; President François Hollande of France; Jon T. Rymer, Inspector General, Department of Defense; Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., USMC; Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter; Abdelhamid Abaaoud, suspected organizer of the November 13 terrorist attacks in Paris, France, who was killed in a police raid in St.-Denis, France, on November 18; and President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo of Indonesia. He also referred to H.R. 4038. A reporter referred to Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Blocking Property of Certain Persons Contributing to the Situation in Burundi

November 22, 2015

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the "order") that declares a national emergency with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by the situation in Burundi.

I have determined that the situation in Burundi, which has been marked by the killing of and violence against civilians, unrest, the incitement of imminent violence, and significant political repression, and which threatens the peace, security, and stability of Burundi, constitutes an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States, and warrants the declaration of a national emergency and the imposition of sanctions.

The order is not targeted at the people of Burundi, but rather is aimed at activities by the government and armed groups that contribute to the turmoil there. It blocks the property and interests in property of persons listed in an Annex to the order and provides criteria for blocking the property and interests in property of any person determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State:

- to be responsible for or complicit in, or to have engaged in, directly or indirectly, any of the following in or in relation to Burundi:
  - actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, or stability of Burundi;
  - actions or policies that undermine democratic processes or institutions in Burundi;
  - human rights abuses;
  - the targeting of women, children, or any civilians through the commission of acts of violence (including killing, maiming, torture, or rape or other sexual violence), abduction, forced displacement, or attacks on schools, hospitals, religious sites, or locations where civilians are seeking refuge, or through other conduct that may constitute a serious abuse or other violation of human rights or a violation of international humanitarian law;
  - actions or policies that prohibit, limit, or penalize the exercise of freedom of

expression or freedom of peaceful assembly;

- the use or recruitment of children by armed groups or armed forces;
- the obstruction of the delivery or distribution of, or access to, humanitarian assistance; or
- attacks, attempted attacks, or threats against United Nations missions, international security presences, or other peacekeeping operations;

- to be a leader or official of:
  - an entity, including any government entity or armed group, that has, or whose members have, engaged in any of the activities described above; or
  - an entity whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order;
- to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of:
  - any of the activities described above; or
  - any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order; or
- to be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order.

In addition, the order suspends entry into the United States of any alien listed in the Annex or determined to meet one or more of the above criteria.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury the authority, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order. All executive agencies are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Paul D. Ryan, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 23. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's News Conference With President François Hollande of France
November 24, 2015

President Obama. President Hollande, it has been an honor to welcome you to the White House before, in happier times than this. But as Americans, we stand by our friends, in good times and in bad, no matter what. So, on behalf of the American people, I want to once again express our deepest condolences to you and all of the people of France for the heinous attacks that took place in Paris.

We're here today to declare that the United States and France stand united—in total solidarity—to deliver justice to these terrorists and those who sent them and to defend our nations. In that spirit, with heavy, but strong hearts, I welcome you today.

François, with your understanding, my statement today will be a little longer than usual. I've been traveling, and this is an important moment for our nations and for the world. This barbaric terrorist group—ISIL, or Daesh—and its murderous ideology pose a serious threat to all of us. It cannot be tolerated. It must be destroyed, and we must do it together. This is the unity of purpose that brings us here today.

On your visit here last year, you said that the French love America. We love the French. Sometimes, we Americans are too shy to say so, but we're not feeling shy today. We Americans love France because we dedicate ourselves to the same ideals: that all people deserve life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. France is our oldest ally. You helped us win our independence. We helped liberate France from fascism. We owe our freedom to each other.

We love France for your spirit and your culture, your joie de vivre. Since the attacks, Americans have recalled their own visits to Paris: visiting the Eiffel Tower or walking along the Seine. We know these places. They're part of our memories, woven into the fabric of our lives and our culture. I am very grateful to the French people for the hospitality they've always shown me and when they welcomed Michelle and our daughters on their first visit to the City of Lights. By my bed in the Residence is a picture of me and Michelle in Luxembourg Gardens kissing. [*Laughter*] Those are the memories we have of Paris. As early on, I had no gray hair.

So when tragedy struck that evening, our hearts broke too. In that stadium and concert hall, in those restaurants and cafes, we see our own. In the faces of the French people, we see ourselves. And that's why so many Americans have embraced the blue, white, and red. And it's why Americans, at candlelight vigils, have joined together to sing "La Marseillaise." We have never forgotten how the French people stood with us after 9/11. And today, we stand with you. *Nous sommes tous français.*

It's been noted that the terrorists did not direct their attacks against the French Government or military. Rather, they focused their violence on the very spirit of France, and by extension, on all liberal democracies. This was an attack on our free and open societies, where people come together to celebrate and sing and compete. In targeting venues where people come together from around the world—killing citizens of nearly 20 countries, including America—this was an attack on the very idea that people of different races and religions and backgrounds can live together in peace.

In short, this was not only a strike against one of the world's great cities, it was an attack against the world itself. It's the same madness that has slaughtered the innocent from Nigeria to the Sinai, from Lebanon to Iraq. It is a scourge that threatens all of us. And that's why, for more than a year, the United States, France, and our coalition of some 65 nations have been united in one mission: to destroy these ISIL terrorists and defeat their vile ideology.

Today President Hollande and I reviewed our coalition's progress. More than 8,000 airstrikes, combined with local partners on the ground, have pushed ISIL back from territory in both Iraq and Syria. Today President Hollande and I agreed that our nations must do even more together. U.S. assistance has supported recent French strikes in Syria, and we're going to keep stepping up that coordination. And as we saw with the attack in Mali, the terrorist threat goes beyond ISIL. This week, I'll sign legislation to sustain our support—including airlift and intelligence—to allies like France, as we work together to root out terrorist networks in Africa.

We'll do even more to prevent attacks at home. Building on our recent intelligence agreement, the United States will continue to quickly share threat information with France. And in the wake of Paris, and with the threats in Belgium, there's also a growing recognition among European nations that they need to ramp up additional efforts to prevent the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. As part of that, I'm calling on the European Union to finally implement the agreement that's been long in the works that would require airlines to share passenger information so we can do more to stop foreign terrorist fighters from entering our countries undetected. And I'm prepared to send teams of our experts to work on this with our European partners to make sure we're redoubling our efforts together.

Regarding the broader crisis in Syria, President Hollande and I agree that Russia's strikes against the moderate opposition only bolster the Asad regime, whose brutality has helped to fuel the rise of ISIL. We agree that Russia

could play a more constructive role if it were to shift the focus of its strikes to defeating ISIL. And likewise, President Hollande and I agree that the best way to bring peace to Syria is through the principles reaffirmed in Vienna, which require active Russian support for a cease-fire and a political transition away from Asad to a democratically elected government that can unite the Syrian people against terrorism.

Finally, François and I understand that one of our greatest weapons in the fight against ISIL is the strength and resilience of our people. And here I want to speak directly to the American people. What happened in Paris is truly horrific. I understand that people worry that something similar could happen here. I want you to know that we will continue to do everything in our power to defend our Nation. Since 9/11, we've taken extraordinary measures to strengthen our homeland security. Our counterterrorism, homeland security, and law enforcement professionals—Federal, State, and local—they are tireless. They have prevented attacks and they have saved lives. They are working every hour, every day for our security. They did so before Paris, they do so now, and they will not stop. They're the best in the world.

But it's not just our security professionals who will defeat ISIL and other terrorist groups. As Americans, we all have a role to play in how we respond to threats. Groups like ISIL cannot defeat us on the battlefield, so they try to terrorize us at home, against soft targets, against civilians, against innocent people. Even as we're vigilant, we cannot—and we will not—succumb to fear. Nor can we allow fear to divide us. For that's how terrorists win. We cannot give them the victory of changing how we go about living our lives.

The good news is, Americans are resilient. We mourned the lives lost at Fort Hood, the Boston Marathon, at Chattanooga. But we did not waver. Our communities have come together. We've gone to ballgames, and we've gone to concerts, and we've gone shopping. And men and women who want to serve our country continue to go to military recruiting offices. We're vigilant, we take precautions, but we go about our business. To those who want to harm us, our actions have shown that we have too much resolve and too much character. Americans will not be terrorized.

I say all this because another part of being vigilant, another part of defeating terrorists like ISIL, is upholding the rights and freedoms that define our two great republics. That includes freedom of religion. That includes equality before the law. There have been times in our history, in moments of fear, when we have failed to uphold our highest ideals, and it has been to our lasting regret. We must uphold our ideals now. Each of us, all of us, must show that America is strengthened by people of every faith and every background.

And related to this, I want to note that under President Hollande, France plans to welcome 30,000 additional Syrian refugees over the next 2 years. Here in the United States, refugees coming to America go through up to 2 years of intense security checks, including biometric screening. Nobody who sets foot in America goes through more screening than refugees. And we're prepared to share these tools with France and our European partners. As François has said, our humanitarian duty to help desperate refugees and our duty to our security, those duties go hand in hand.

On the Statue of Liberty, a gift from the people of France, there are words we know so well: Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free. That's the spirit that makes us American. That's the spirit that binds us to France. That's the spirit we need today.

In closing, I want to salute the people of Paris for showing the world how to stay strong in the face of terrorism. Even as they grieve, Parisians have begun returning to their cafes, riding the Métro, and going to stadiums to cheer for their teams. Crowds gather in the Place de la République, including a mother who brought her children, she said, "to let them see that we should not be afraid." As one Parisian said, "Paris will always be Paris."

And next week, I will be joining President Hollande and world leaders in Paris for the global climate conference. What a powerful re-

buke to the terrorists it will be when the world stands as one and shows that we will not be deterred from building a better future for our children.

So, President Hollande, my fellow Americans, let's remember we've faced greater threats to our way of life before: fascism, communism, a First World War, a Second, a long cold war. Each and every time, we prevailed. We have prevailed because our way of life is stronger, because we stay united, because even as we are relentless in the face of evil, we draw on what's best in ourselves and in the character of our countries. It will be no different this time. Make no mistake, we will win, and groups like ISIL will lose. And standing with allies like France, we will continue to show the world the best of American leadership.

Vive la France. And God bless the United States of America.

Mr. President.

President Hollande. Ladies and gentlemen, please allow me, first and foremost, to thank the President of the United States, Barack Obama, for the solidarity he has shown immediately as we found out about the terror attacks. He was the first one to call me. It was very late in France, 2 a.m., when Barack called. The President of the United States had already expressed his solidarity towards France, his emotion, his compassion against the horror. And on that night, he meant to tell me that the United States stood by France, that the help that could be provided to France would have no limits, and that we had a duty, a joint duty, to pull our forces together and fight terrorism.

I do not forget either all of the messages that the American people sent to the French people over the past few days: the French colors, the French flags all abound in many gatherings; these candles in places that represent France here in the United States; "La Marseillaise," our national anthem, sung in official ceremonies. It is true that in 9/11, we all felt Americans. But after the 13th of November, Americans felt French. Our two peoples, together, merged as one, sharing the same emotion and also the most—same willingness to fight for freedom, to stand for our values.

We are not two similar peoples. We each have our own history. We have our own culture, our own background. But we share the same trust and the same faith in freedom. It is France that came under attack on the 13th of November. France, for what it is—a country which we consider unique in the world because France speaks to the world—France came under attack for what it represents, for what it stands for, for its culture, our way of living, as well as our values, our principles.

But by targeting France, the terrorists, the cowardly murderers, were targeting the world in these restaurants, in these cafes, as well as the Bataclan, that concert venue. They were men and women, most of them young, who came from 20 countries, at least. And they shared the same passion for life. And that's the reason why they were murdered.

My thoughts are with the friends and family of a young American student, Nohemi Gonzalez, who came as well to share a moment of culture and joy. I—my thoughts also go to this American band that was playing at the Bataclan. Our cultures on that occasion were together to bring the same enthusiasm, and they were hit by terrorists.

We are facing a terror group which organizes itself on a territory. They have some substantial resources. They are striving on smuggling of oil, drug, human beings. And since the beginning of the year, they hit many countries: Denmark, Tunisia, Lebanon, Kuwait, Turkey, Egypt, as well as Russia, by taking down a Russian plane.

So, together with President Obama, today we wanted on the occasion of that meeting, first of all, to share our determination—relentless determination—to fight terrorism everywhere and anywhere. We also meant to tell the world that we will not allow those who want to destroy what we've built, we will not allow them to do it—to destroy what we've built, generation after generation. They will not be able to damage the world. And against Daesh, we need a joint response, an implacable joint response.

France and the United States stand together to bring that joint response. Militarily, it is

about destroying Daesh no matter where they are. It is about taking out their financing, hunting down their leaders, dismantling their networks, and taking back the land they currently control. We, therefore, decided, President Obama and myself, to scale up our strikes both in Syria and in Iraq, to broaden their scope, to strengthen our intelligence-sharing regarding the targets we must aim at.

The priority is to take back key locations in the hands of Daesh in Syria. It is also a matter of urgency to close the border between Turkey and Syria and prevent terrorists from crossing the border and coming to Europe or other places and undertake such terrible attacks. We also took the decision to work together with our partners of the coalition in Iraq and to support all of those who are fighting Daesh on the ground.

The aim is to make sure that these forces can be supported, helped by all countries that are willing to act militarily to destroy Daesh. The resolution of the Security Council that was voted unanimously Friday, after being introduced by France and supported by the United States, this resolution provided us with the clear basis to act. This is what France is currently doing. Our aircraft carrier, the *Charles de Gaulle,* is currently in the east of Mediterranean and allows us to enjoy more capability. Yesterday, for the sixth time after the terror attacks in Paris, we struck Raqqa. In addition, we've been providing some assistance to Iraqi fighters in the region of Ramadi and in Mosul, within the framework of the coalition.

Now, diplomatically, both President Obama and myself have strengthened our cooperation as early as the night after the attacks. And I would like to commend what—everything that is being done so that intelligence and information available can be used to tackle terrorists and to follow their movements, so that we prevent them from doing them—from doing what they want to. Because beyond Syria and Iraq, what they want is somehow to spread fear everywhere so that we doubt, so that we make decisions which are exactly contrary to what we want in terms of freedom and rights. But we will not give in. That being said, we have to defend ourselves and use intelligence.

Diplomatically, we're working on a credible political transition in Syria within the framework of the Vienna process. And I commend the work done by Ministers Fabius and Kerry to agree a timeline that will enable a cease-fire, of course, as quickly as possible, and to open up to a process that will lead to Bashar al-Asad's departure. Because we cannot imagine the Syrians getting together, gathering around the leader who is responsible for some—the most of 300,000 dead in a few years. So a government of unity is required, but that must lead to Asad's departure.

The Syrian crisis is directly relevant to Europe, first of all, given the terrorist threat, but also because there are millions of refugees fleeing the regime's bombs and Daesh atrocities. If we were to abandon them, we would betray what we are. This is the reason why I reject identifying migration and terrorism.

At the same time, we must control the borders. Today, people are risking their lives to flee when they travel at sea between Turkey and Greece. Turkey, therefore, plays an important role, and it is together with Turkey that we must find solutions so that the refugees can stay close to their country of origin. And we need to make sure that the required controls, the checks are implemented at the border.

On Thursday, I will be traveling to Moscow to meet with Vladimir Putin. And I will tell him that France can work together with Russia if Russia concentrates its military action on Daesh, against ISIL, and if Russia fully commits to the political solution in Syria. This is what we want to do. We want to gather all countries, all those who are willing to find and to implement a political solution in Syria. We do not want to exclude anyone, but we want to make sure that this political solution can eradicate terrorism.

Lastly, next week—that is, on Monday—we will be hosting in Paris the climate conference. I certainly could not imagine that this conference would be taking place against such a background. At the same time, I think there cannot be any better symbol or response, but to hold the conference in Paris where the at-

tacks took place, where we took the right measures in terms of security protections as well as in defending our values. There is no greater symbol than holding this conference on climate in Paris with some 150 heads of state and government.

Never before did France host so many leaders of the international community. They're coming to sort out the climate challenge and, again, to work and to find the right agreement so that we can limit greenhouse gases emissions and make sure that our children and our grandchildren live better, or simply can live. But they are also coming to express their support to freedom, to the fight against extremism, that radical Islam, which is becoming dangerous.

Yes, all of them are coming no matter their background, no matter their religion, their convictions, to express the same principle, the same values with the same word: life. Yes, simply life.

And this is the reason why I am very pleased that President Obama will allow us to succeed. I commend his recent statements over the past few weeks and months, but I also commend the commitments he's made in the name of the United States, as well as in the name of the world. It was very important that one of the most powerful countries in the world, if not the most powerful, and therefore with the highest level of emissions, could also be there to face the future like we've been facing history.

What we will be doing early next week in Paris means that we can continue to live, as well as protect our lives and prepare that of all children. France and the United States, given their history and the values, the founding values of both our nations, given our spirits, we both have that duty to act as a matter of—urgently against terrorism and against Daesh and, at the same time, to prepare for the future.

Against that background, even though it is a very dire one, I'm pleased to be with Barack Obama to send across that message to the entire world.

Thank you.

President Obama. We've got time for a few questions. I'm going to start with Roberta Rampton of Reuters.

Downing of Russian Military Aircraft by Turkey/Syria

Q. Thank you. This is a question for both of you. First, what is your reaction to Turkey shooting down a Russian plane today? And does this draw NATO into a confrontation with Russia? How do you keep this from spiraling out of control?

And, President Obama, what does this incident mean for future prospects of military coordination—more military coordination with Russia? And, President Hollande, ahead of your trip to Moscow on Thursday, what are the prospects for closer military coordination with Russia, given what happened today?

President Obama. Good. Well, first of all, we're still getting the details of what happened. And I expect to be in communications, potentially directly, with President Erdogan sometime over the next several days.

Turkey, like every country, has a right to defend its territory and its airspace. I think it's very important right now for us to make sure that both the Russians and the Turks are talking to each other to find out exactly what happened and take measures to discourage any kind of escalation.

I do think that this points to a ongoing problem with the Russian operations in the sense that they are operating very close to a Turkish border and they are going after a moderate opposition that are supported by not only Turkey, but a wide range of countries. And if Russia is directing its energies towards Daesh and ISIL, some of those conflicts, or potentials for mistakes or escalation, are less likely to occur.

I also think this underscores the importance of us making sure that we move this political track forward as quickly as possible. Like President Hollande, our view from the start has been that Russia is welcome to be part of this broad-based coalition that we've set up. There's never been a point in time in which we said that we don't want Russia or other countries that may have differences with us on a

whole host of other things to avoid working with us against ISIL.

The challenge has been Russia's focus on propping up Asad rather than focusing on ISIL. I had a conversation with President Putin in Turkey, and I indicated to him at the time that to the extent that they make that strategic shift—focus on the Vienna process, where they have been constructive, to try to bring all the parties together; try to execute a political transition that all parties would agree to; and refocus attention on going after ISIL—then there's enormous capacity for us to cooperate.

Until that happens, it's very difficult. It's difficult because if their priority is attacking the moderate opposition that might be future members of an inclusive Syrian Government, Russia is not going to get the support of us or a range of other members of the coalition.

But I do think that there is the possibility of cooperation. The sooner we agree to this political process, the less likely that you have the kinds of events that took place, apparently, today.

President Hollande. The event that took place is a serious one, and we can only regret it. Turkey is currently providing all of the information to NATO so that we can find out what truly happened and whether Turkey's airspace indeed was entered into. But we must prevent an escalation; that would be extremely damageable. The only purpose is to fight against terrorism and Daesh. This is what we must do, all of us: we, Turkey, Russia.

And what just took place, like Barack said, means that we must find a solution to the Syrian crisis, because we can see what the risks are otherwise: the risks of escalation. I, therefore, will be traveling to Russia this week because we have this resolution of the Security Council, and it does show that we must take action against Daesh, against terrorism. That resolution has been voted unanimously. In a way, that was the broadest possible coalition.

Then, I will ask President Putin, as I've done before and what I told the Russians a number of times already, that the strikes must be against Daesh, against terrorism, and those who precisely are threatening us. They are threatening the Russians, like ourselves in Europe, like France that was targeted over the past few days. We must, therefore, coordinate ourselves, cooperate, but on that basis, and make sure that we're all acting against Daesh. And that will be part of the political process, one that must lead to the solution. And we all know what the parameters of the solution are or are not. We know that there's a deadlock today.

Lastly, I mentioned the *Charles de Gaulle* aircraft carrier, which is in the east of the Mediterranean now. As a matter of fact, there are also some Russian forces. And I, therefore, agreed with President Putin that we must share our intelligence so that we can act in coordination. We must not contradict ourselves. And it's already the case, and we'll continue to do so.

Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/Syria

[*At this point, a reporter spoke in French, and her remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

Q. Mr. President, the Americans have some Special Forces in Syria. Beyond the words and beyond what is happening, are you going to send some Special Forces as well to Syria? Are you considering some ground intervention there?

Mr. President, beyond the emotion that we can feel here, beyond these beautiful statements, for more than a year we heard all of you saying that Asad must go, that a political transition is necessary in Syria. Mr. President, can you today, here, in front of us, tell us a specific date, a deadline for Asad to go?

President Obama. Who is this addressed to? Me or for him?

[*The reporter spoke in English as follows.*]

Q. Both of you, Mr. President, yes.

President Obama. We're both Presidents. [*Laughter*]

Q. I'm sure you understand French a little bit, Mr. President, but I can translate in English, if needed.

President Obama. No, no, I had the translation. You said "President," and we've got two Presidents here. [*Laughter*]

Q. Good.

President Obama. Okay.

President Hollande. I will not provide you with a date, because it must be as soon as possible. That is one of the requirements for a solution to be found. But at the same time, allow me to underline something. There is a new mindset now. The crisis in Syria has been ongoing for 4 years—4 years. There are probably more than 300,000 deaths—dead. And this is not just relevant to the countries of the region, which are hosting the refugees. It is relevant to Europe and the entire world now with that issue of refugees. And those who believe that we could wait some more and that, in any case, it was far away, they now realize that we have an influx of refugees, that the terrorists—the risk is everywhere due to Daesh. We, therefore, must act.

You also asked me what we were going to do, what more. We will intensify the strikes. We will have some more specific target to make sure that Daesh resources, their means are cut off, including their command centers, the trucks carrying oil, their training centers where they prepare terror attacks. We will continue and we will intensify our strikes at the heart of the cities which are currently in the hands of Daesh.

France will not intervene militarily on the ground. It is for the local sources—forces to do so. We've been supporting them for a number of months. We will continue to do so. And they will do the job on the ground after we—after our strikes that will enable them to do so. But France will take its responsibilities regarding that support, which is absolutely necessary.

President Obama. Let me just make a couple of broader comments about the operations against ISIL. As was already indicated, we've taken thousands of strikes, have taken thousands of ISIL fighters, including top commanders and leaders, off the battlefield. We have squeezed their supply lines. We have empowered and armed local groups that are pushing against them, including, most recently, in Sinjar. We're providing training and assistance to the Iraqi Government as they prepare to retake places like Ramadi that had been overrun.

We've seen some success. But the question now is, how can we accelerate it? And in fact, even before the tragedy in Paris, I had gathered together my national security forces—it had been a year—to review where we had made progress, what worked, what did not, and had put together a plan to accelerate and advance the pressure that we can place on ISIL. And we intend to execute on those plans, but we also think, as François said, that there may be new openness on the part of other coalition members to help resource and provide additional assistance both to the coalition as a whole and to local forces on the ground.

With respect to Mr. Asad, I think we've got to let the Vienna process play itself out. It is our best opportunity. And so the notion that there would be an immediate date in advance of us getting a broad agreement on that political process and the details, I think, doesn't make sense. As soon as we have a framework for a political transition—potentially, a new Constitution, elections—I think it's in that context that we can start looking at Mr. Asad choosing not to run and potentially seeing a new Syria emerge.

But it's going to be hard. And we should not be under any illusions. Syria has broken down. It began to break down the moment that Mr. Asad started killing indiscriminately his own people. ISIL was able to move into Raqqa in part because of a thorough rejection on the part of many Syrians of the Asad regime, and a power vacuum emerged.

And it is going to be a difficult, long, methodical process to bring back together various factions within Syria to maintain a Syrian state and institutions and to create the kind of stability that allows people to start coming back in and rebuilding their lives. But it's possible. And the urgency that we've seen even before Paris out of countries like Russia indicate that

they recognize they can't be there too long and ultimately win a military battle successfully.

Olivier Knox, Yahoo! News.

Downing of Russian Military Aircraft by Turkey/Syria/Terrorist Attacks in Paris, France/Europe-U.S. Counterterrorism Cooperation

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. *Monsieur President, bonjour et merci.* Mr. President, could you tell us whether the Russian plane did, in fact, breach Turkish airspace? And given the fury of the Russian response on economic, diplomatic, and rhetorical fronts, how concerned are you that there might also be a military component, if not in Turkey, then perhaps with expanded action against coalition interests inside Syria?

[*The reporter spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

Q. And, Mr. President, regarding the measures announced today when it comes to strengthening the cooperation on military intelligence and all this, had they been taken a month or weeks ago, do you think they would have prevented the terror attacks that took place in Paris, or will it enable us to prevent some further terror attacks?

President Obama. We don't have all the information yet, so I don't want to comment on the specifics. We will be gathering all that information. We expect the Turks to provide information. I'm sure the Russians will have some information. And we'll be able to confirm what happened in part through our own intelligence and our own tracking of that border area.

As François indicated, my top priority is going to be to ensure that this does not escalate. And hopefully, this is a moment in which all parties can step back and make a determination as to how their interests are best served.

The Russians had several hundred people of their own killed by ISIL. And the flow of foreign fighters out of Russian areas into Syria poses an enormous, long-term threat to Russian territory. So there is a potential convergence of interests between the various parties. It requires us working with them to make the kind of strategic shift that's necessary and that, frankly, I've talked to Putin about for 5 years now. It requires a recognition that the existing structure cannot gain the legitimacy to stop the war, and until you stop the war, you're going to have a vacuum in which these kinds of terrorist organizations can operate more effectively.

Let me say one last thing, because I've tracked the question that you posed to President Hollande about what could or could not have been prevented. All of our intelligence personnel here in the United States, across the Atlantic, work tirelessly, as I said earlier, to disrupt plots and prevent terrorists attacks. The vast majority of their successes in disrupting plots are not advertised. You never hear about them. But were it not for the dedication of those intelligence and law enforcement and military professionals, this would be a much more dangerous world.

So you have to be careful about speculating about "what if" and "could have" and "would have" in a situation like this. Because it's hard. You have eight individuals with light weapons; that's hard—that's a hard thing to track. What is true, though, is that we can do a better job of coordinating between countries. And I've been talking to our European partners for quite some time now about the need for better intelligence, sharing passenger name records, working to ensure that when people enter into Europe—particularly now—that the information across various borders is shared on a timely basis, and you have biometric information and other technologies that can make it more accurate. It doesn't mean it's always going to be a hundred-percent foolproof, but we can do better on those fronts.

And one of the challenges has been, frankly, in the past several years, that you have different legal traditions, concerns about privacy and civil liberties, all of which are entirely legitimate. I don't think those can be ignored now, because that's part of the—those are part of the values that we—that make us who we are and that we have to adhere to.

But I do think that this is a reminder that this is a dangerous world. And rooting out small bands of terrorist groups who maintain

good operational security and are using modern technologies in ways that are hard to track, that that's a tough job. And we're all going to have to pool our resources much more effectively together than we have in the past. And I think when François goes back to Europe, his leadership, the leadership of other Presidents and Prime Ministers around this issue is going to be as important as anything that we do. Okay?

President Hollande. Allow me to go back to what Daesh truly is. It is somehow an organization, a terrorist group occupying a territory in Iraq and Syria, killing. And they want to install rules that dishonor humanity. This is what Daesh is doing there. And this is what they are trying to do in other countries, everywhere chaos stands.

And then, we have to deal with the number of networks more or less organized in a number of countries that are being used to lead terror attacks, like was the case precisely in Paris. We know that this dreadful plan was prepared in Syria and then organized in a number of countries. And there are also some accomplices in France, given that some of the terrorists are French, those who committed these acts of war.

So, if we want to tackle terrorism, we must act not only to destroy Daesh where they are—in Syria, in Iraq—but we must also dismantle and destroy these networks. How can we proceed? Well, first of all, militarily, by intensifying our strikes, by taking back these territories, thanks to the local forces on the ground, which we can support by finding a political solution in Syria, by making sure that the territorial integrity of Iraq is restored. This is what we can do.

Then, when it comes to protection measures to protect our territory and our people, this is what I announced in France, and this is what we have to do to eradicate these networks and all of these accomplices and those who are present. Some of them just arrived; others have been there for a long time, and they are not necessarily identified as a threat. It is, therefore, necessary that we strengthen yet further our cooperation in terms of intelligence.

The Paris attacks generated a lot of emotion. But that's not enough—compassion, solidarity. And I take note of it, but we must act. And for a number of days now, I've been trying to convince—convincing all the countries that can act to do so.

I met with David Cameron yesterday. He announced that he would take a number of measures to his Parliament. That is important. Today I'm here with Barack so that we can act with greater intensity and coherence as well. Tomorrow I will be hosting German Chancellor Angela Merkel so that European countries, including Germany, can face up to their responsibilities, including in terms of military—intelligence and police cooperation and maybe more. I will also travel to Moscow, so that Russia acts, can take action against Daesh and only against Daesh. And then I will receive Matteo Renzi, the head of the Italian Government. I will also have an opportunity to talk to all of the European leaders, given that a European Council, together with Turkey, will be held on Sunday.

So it is all of that that must get together and enable us to implement coordination, cooperation in our actions so that we can act on the source, Daesh, and networks that they can use. It is that strength that will enable us to succeed.

Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/Russia/Syria

[*A reporter spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

Q. A question from BFMTV. Both of you today have talked about coordination, cooperation against Daesh. Does it mean that this single coalition—which you mentioned last week, President Hollande—is gone? That it is inconceivable to have the Russians and the Americans to work together under this single command?

And then Bashar al-Asad, you said you could not put a date on his departure. Does it mean that his departure is not a preamble or prerequisite for the future of Syria?

President Hollande. Regarding the coalition of the international community, I believe that the resolution approved by all at the Security Council enabled us to say that now the entire world is committed to fighting against Daesh. Then—and this is what I will check when I travel to Moscow—we need one single goal; that is, to tackle terrorism and fight against Daesh militarily. And I believe that we can have some further cooperation and coordination militarily to do more.

At the same time, we have to be clear when it comes to the political solution, the one that will enable us to find an outcome for Syria. And in this respect, like we've said, and—but we can repeat it, Bashar al-Asad cannot be the future of Syria.

In Vienna, we are already working with all of the countries, even though they do not necessarily—they do not have the same stance: Turkey, Iran, Gulf countries, the United States, France, and of course, all of those who are meant to find a solution. But we must work on that transition, a transition where Bashar al-Asad plays no role. Because he's been the problem, so he cannot be the solution.

President Obama. Just to comment very quickly, we've got a coalition of 65 countries who have been active in pushing back against ISIL for quite some time. France has been a central part of that coalition, as have European countries, Arab countries. Countries as far flung as Australia and countries in Southeast Asia are part of that coalition.

Russia right now is a coalition of two, Iran and Russia, supporting Asad. Given Russia's military capabilities and given the influence they have on the Asad regime, them cooperating would be enormously helpful in bringing about a resolution of the civil war in Syria and allow us all to refocus our attention on ISIL.

But I think it's important for—to remember that you've got a global coalition organized. Russia is the outlier. We hope that they refocus their attention on what is the most substantial threat and that they serve as a constructive partner. And if and when they do, it will make it easier for us to go after ISIL and Daesh.

Although I think it's also important to recognize that the kinds of airstrikes that they're carrying out—just like the kinds of airstrikes that we're carrying out—in and of themselves are not sufficient. And the work that we do to bolster local fighting forces, the cutting off of supply lines, financing, oil, reducing the flow of foreign fighters, the intelligence work that needs to be done—all of that is something that we are doing now and that they can supplement.

But that's going to be a process that involves hard, methodical work. It's not going to be something that happens just because suddenly we take a few more airstrikes. And that's the kind of hard work that I know France is prepared to do, the United States is prepared to do, and perhaps, in the future, Russia will be as well. Okay?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 12 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, President Obama referred to President Bashar al-Asad of Syria; Paris, France, residents Raphaella Giraudi and Raphaelle Oudart; President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey; and President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia. President Hollande referred to Minister of Foreign Affairs Laurent Fabius of France; U.S. Secretary of State John F. Kerry; Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Matteo Renzi of Italy. President Hollande spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom
November 24, 2015

The President. Hello, everybody! Please. Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. Everybody, have a seat. Well, welcome to the White House, everybody.

Audience member. Thank you.

Audience member. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. A bunch of people were saying I was pretty busy today, which is true. [*Laughter*] But this is a fun kind of busy right here. Today we celebrate some extraordinary people—innovators, artists, and leaders—who contribute to America's strength as a nation, and we offer them our highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Let me tell you just a little bit about them, although I suspect people here already know their stories. Growing up in West Virginia, Katherine Johnson counted everything. She counted steps. She counted dishes. She counted the distance to the church. By 10 years old, she was in high school. By 18, she had graduated from college with degrees in math and French. As an African American woman, job options were limited, but she was eventually hired as one of several female mathematicians for the agency that would become NASA.

Katherine calculated the flight path for America's first mission in space, the path that put—and the path that put Neil Armstrong on the Moon. She was even asked to double-check the computer's math—[*laughter*]—on John Glenn's orbit around the Earth. So, if you think your job is pressure-packed—[*laughter*]—hers meant that forgetting to carry the one might send somebody floating off into the solar system. [*Laughter*] In her 33 years at NASA, Katherine was a pioneer who broke the barriers of race and gender, showing generations of young people that everyone can excel in math and science and reach for the stars.

In the early 1960s, a lawyer named Bill Ruckelshaus drove through Indiana in a truck, sample—taking samples from streams "choked with dead fish." He called it "a very good time." [*Laughter*] I think we have different definitions of "a very good time." But it was all part of protecting Americans from big polluters. And in 1970, when Richard Nixon created the Environmental Protection Agency, he made Bill, a fellow Republican, its first director. Under Bill's leadership, the EPA developed new clean air standards, banned the harmful pesticide DDT. Most importantly, Bill set a powerful precedent that protecting our environment is something we must come together and do as a country.

He became known as "Mr. Clean"—[*laughter*]—and lived up to that nickname when he resigned from the Nixon administration rather than derail the Watergate investigation. He's never truly retired. In recent years he's led the fight to protect Puget Sounds, and he's urged his fellow Republicans to join him in combating climate change. So he spent his life putting country before party or politics. He reminds us how noble public service can be. And our air and water is cleaner and our lives are brighter because of him.

Back in 1966, plans were laid for a highway straight through some of Baltimore's most diverse neighborhoods. The new road seemed like a go. It was about to happen, that is, until it ran into a young social worker. [*Laughter*] And let's just say, you don't want to get on the wrong side of Barbara Mikulski. [*Laughter*] She stopped that highway and jump-started one of the finest public service careers we've ever seen. And for decades, Barbara has been a lion—lioness—on Capitol Hill, fighting for working families, fighting for high-tech, high-paying jobs, fighting for the prospects of America's women and girls.

I couldn't have been prouder to have her by my side as I signed into law the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, first law that I signed. And Barbara's legacy reflects her roots: a mom who offered grocery store credit to steelworkers on strike, a dad who greeted every customer with a friendly "Can I help you?" We are all lucky that's a question Barbara's been asking and answering longer than any female lawmaker in our history.

There are people in our country's history who don't look left or right, they just look straight ahead. And Shirley Chisholm was one of those people. Driven by a profound commitment to justice, she became the first African American Congresswoman, the first African American woman from a major political party to run for President. When Shirley was assigned to the House Agricultural Committee—despite the fact that her district was from New

York City—[*laughter*]—she said, "Apparently, all they know here in Washington about Brooklyn is that a tree grew there." [*Laughter*] But she made the most of her new role, helping to create the supplemental nutrition program that feeds poor mothers and their children. Shirley Chisholm's example transcends her life. And when asked how she'd like to be remembered, she had an answer: "I'd like them to say that Shirley Chisholm has—had guts." And I'm proud to say it: Shirley Chisholm had guts.

"At its best," Lee Hamilton once said, "representative democracy gives us a system where all of us have a voice in the process and a stake in the product." In his 34 years in Congress, Lee Hamilton was a faithful servant of—to that ideal, representing his district, his beloved Indiana, and his country with integrity and honor. As head of the House Foreign Affairs and Intelligence Committees, he helped guide us through the cold war and into a new era of American leadership, a man widely admired on both sides of the aisle for his honesty, his wisdom, and consistent commitment to bipartisanship. From serving as Vice Chair of the 9/11 Commission to making Congress more effective, Lee remains a tireless public servant and a trusted advisor and friend to many, and I am proud to count myself among them.

We also celebrate those who have stirred our souls and lifted our spirits as icons of the stage, screen and song. Born in Brooklyn to a middle class Jewish family—I didn't know you were Jewish, Barbra—[*laughter*]—Barbra Streisand attended her first Broadway show at age 14 and remembers thinking, "I could go up on that stage and play any role without any trouble at all." That's what's called chutzpah. [*Laughter*] And it helps when you've got amazing talent, all of which made her a global sensation, one whose voice has been described as "liquid diamonds," and whose fans have considered bronzing her used coffee cups. [*Laughter*] She has sold more albums in America than any woman in history. She has collected just about every honor and award that there is. I couldn't believe she hadn't gotten this one. [*Laughter*] Off the stage, she has been a passionate advocate for issues like heart disease and women's equality. I'm getting all *verklempt* just thinking about it. [*Laughter*]

In an interview, violinist Itzhak Perlman was once asked what sound he loves, and his eyes lit up, and he replied, "The sound of onions sizzling in a pan." [*Laughter*] This is a man of large appetites who knows how to live. He also happens to be a pretty good musician and persevered through childhood polio to become not only a virtuoso, but also a powerful advocate for people with disabilities. He has played with every major orchestra in the world, conducted many of them, taught generations of young musicians. He has won Grammys. He has won Emmys. He's performed with all the greats: Leonard Bernstein. Yo-Yo Ma. Telly from "Sesame Street." [*Laughter*] But what truly sets him apart and what makes him perhaps the most beloved violinist of our time is that he approaches music the way he approaches everything in life, with passion and with joy. He lays bare the soul of a piece, making us feel each note and giving us a glimpse of something bigger than ourselves. And by doing so, he makes the world a little more beautiful.

I'm proud to call the next honoree a friend as well. The truth is, a lot of people say that about James Taylor. That's what happens when you spend four decades telling people, "Just call out my name, and I'll come running." [*Laughter*] But that's the thing about James: You always feels like he's singing only to you. As a fan of his once said, James can "turn an arena into a living room." It's why he became one of the driving forces of the singer-songwriter movement. And his honesty and candor about overcoming substance abuse has inspired not only his music, but people all around the world. So, come fire or rain, come Carolina, Mexico, or a country road—[*laughter*]—James Taylor is there to comfort us, to help us look within and to urge us all to shower the people we love with love. [*Laughter*]

On a Miami night in 1975, a young woman named Gloria walked into a wedding reception and saw a handsome young man named Emilio leading his band. He was playing "Do the Hustle" on an accordion. [*Laughter*] I'm quoting her now: She said she found this "sexy and

brave." [*Laughter*] I mean, the brave part I understand. [*Laughter*] But it turns out, he had a few other things up his sleeve. He brought her up to sing a few songs that night, invited her to join his band. A few months later, Emilio asked Gloria for a birthday kiss. It was not her birthday—it wasn't his birthday, but he got the kiss anyway. And Emilio and Gloria Estefan have been partners—on and off stage—ever since.

Some worried they were "too American for Latins and too Latin for Americans." Turns out, everybody just wanted to dance and do the conga. And together, their fusion sound has sold more than 100 million records. And as proud Cuban Americans, they've promoted their cultural heritage and inspired fans all over the world.

"An awful lot of people have gone . . . to musicals to forget their troubles"—just like they were dancing to the Estefans' music. Stephen Sondheim, I think, is somebody who is not interested in that. As a composer and a lyricist and a genre unto himself, Sondheim challenges his audiences. His greatest hits aren't tunes you can hum; they're reflections on roads we didn't take and wishes gone wrong, relationships so frayed and fractured there's nothing left to do but "Send in the Clowns." [*Laughter*] Yet Stephen's music is so beautiful, his lyrics so precise, that even as he exposes the imperfections of everyday life, he transcends them. We transcend them. Put simply, Stephen reinvented the American musical, has loomed large over more than six decades in the theater. And with revivals from Broadway to the big screen, he is still here, pulling us up short and giving us support for "being alive."

Here's how Steven Spielberg once explained his creative process: "Once a month, the sky falls on my head. I come to, and I see another movie I want to make." [*Laughter*] This sounds painful for Steven, but it has worked out pretty well for the rest of us. In his career, Steven has introduced us to extraterrestrials, rogue archeologists, killer sharks. He's taken us to Neverland, Jurassic Park, but also the beaches of Normandy and Nazi concentration camps. Despite redefining the world—word "prolific," a Spielberg movie is still a Spielberg movie.

[*At this point, a phone rang.*]

Somebody is calling to see if they can book him for a deal right now. [*Laughter*] They want to make a pitch: "So there's this really good-looking President and"—[*laughter*].

A Spielberg movie, marked by boundless imagination, worlds rendered in extraordinary detail, characters whose struggle to seize control of their destinies—all of that reminds us so powerfully of our own lives. And Steven's films are marked most importantly by a faith in our common humanity, the same faith in humanity that led him to create the Shoah Foundation and lend a voice to survivors of genocide around the world. His stories have shaped America's story, and his values have shaped our world.

So we celebrate artists, public servants, and two legends from America's pastime. What can be said about Lawrence "Yogi" Berra that he couldn't say better himself? [*Laughter*] The son of an Italian bricklayer, they called him "Yogi" because he sat like one while waiting to bat. And he was born to play baseball. But he loved his country, and at 18, he left St. Louis for the Navy and ultimately found himself on Omaha Beach. After he returned, Yogi embarked on a career that would make him one of the greatest catchers of all time. With the Yankees, he played in 14 World Series in 18 years, won 10 World Series rings, had 3 MVP awards. He had, as one biographer put it, "the winningest career in the history of American sports." Nobody has won more than this guy. And he coached the game with as much heart as he played it. He lived his life with pride and humility and an original, open mind. One thing we know for sure, "If you can't imitate him, don't copy him." [*Laughter*] It took everybody a while there. [*Laughter*]

We don't have time to list all of Willie Mays's statistics: 660 home runs, .302 lifetime batting average. The list goes on and on. I won't describe that miracle grab at the Polo Grounds either, because Willie says that wasn't even his best catch. [*Laughter*] I will say this: We have never seen an all-around, five-tool player quite like Willie before, and we haven't

seen one since. He could throw and he could field, hit for contact and for power. And, of course, he was so fast, he could barely keep a hat on his head. [*Laughter*] On top of that, Willie also served our country, and his quiet example while excelling on one of America's biggest stages helped carry forward the banner of civil rights. A few years ago, Willie rode with me on Air Force One. I told him then what I'll tell all of you now: It's because of giants like Willie that someone like me could even think about running for President.

And finally, we celebrate those who have challenged us to live up to our values. Billy Frank, Jr., liked to say: "I wasn't a policy guy. I was a getting-arrested guy." [*Laughter*] And that's true. Billy was arrested more than 50 times in his fight to protect tribal fishing rights and save the salmon that had fed his family for generations. He was spat on, shot at, chased, and clubbed and cast as an outlaw. But Billy kept fighting. Because he knew he was right. And in 1974, a Federal judge agreed, honoring the promises made to Northwest tribes more than a century before. Billy went on to become a national voice for Indian Country and a warrior for the natural world. "I don't believe in magic," Billy once said. "I believe in the Sun and the stars, the water, the hawks flying, the rivers running, the wind talking." They tell us how healthy we are, he said, "because we and they are the same."

Twenty-three years ago, Bonnie Carroll's world was turned upside down. Her husband, Tom, a brigadier general in the Army, was killed in a plane crash, along with seven other soldiers. Heartbroken, Bonnie began healing the only way that she knew how: by helping others. She founded the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, creating a national community to support the families of our fallen servicemembers. And each year, TAPS holds seminars and workshops for military families across the country. Through their Good Grief camps, they bring together children of our fallen to learn how to cope with loss, to honor the legacy of their heroes and to try and have some fun as well. As one Gold Star child who lost her father in Iraq said, "[Because of TAPS], I know someone is by my side."

On a Saturday night in March of 1942, Minoru Yasui left his law office to walk around Portland, Oregon. It was a seemingly ordinary act that defied the discriminatory military curfew imposed on Japanese Americans during World War II. Min took his case to the Supreme Court and lost, a decision he fought for the rest of his life. Yet, despite what Japanese Americans endured—suspicion, hostility, forced removal, internment—Min never stopped believing in the promise of his country. He never stopped fighting for equality and justice for all. "We believe in the greatness and in the great ideals of this country," he once said. "We think that there is a future for all humanity in the United States of America." Today, Min's legacy has never been more important. It is a call to our national conscience, a reminder of our enduring obligation to be "the land of the free and the home of the brave," an America worthy of his sacrifice.

So, ladies and gentlemen, these are the recipients of the 2015 Presidential Medal of Freedom. Let's give them a big round of applause.

And now—have a seat. [*Laughter*] We're not done. They've got to get some hardware here. [*Laughter*] To my military aide, let's read the citations.

[*At this point, Maj. Wesley N. Spurlock III, USAF, Air Force Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medals, assisted by Cmdr. Timothy J. Myers, USN, Navy Aide to the President.*]

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, give them a big round of applause, the 2015 Presidential Medal of Freedom winners. This is an extraordinary group.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Even by the standards of Medal of Freedom recipients, this is a class act.

We are just reminded when we see these individuals here on the stage what an incredible tapestry this country is. And what a great blessing to be in a nation where individuals as di-

verse, from as wildly different backgrounds, can help to shape our dreams, how we live together, help define justice and freedom and love. They represent what's best in us, and we are very, very proud to be able to celebrate them here today.

My understanding is also, there's pretty good food in the White House, so please enjoy the reception. And congratulations to all the recipients. Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:19 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Allen Barra, author, "Yogi Berra: Eternal Yankee." The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the reading of the citations.

Remarks Following a Meeting on Homeland Security
November 25, 2015

Good morning, everybody. I just had a chance to meet with my national security team, including my Secretary of Homeland Security, Jeh Johnson, my FBI Director, Jim Comey, and my Attorney General, Loretta Lynch, for a regular update on our security posture post-Paris and going into the holiday season.

I think all of us recognize how horrific and heinous what took place in Paris was. And as I said yesterday, for many of us, the events there touched a deep chord, given the connection between the United States and France, the degree to which Americans see in Paris a way of life that's so familiar to us here in American cities. And given the shocking images, I know that Americans have been asking each other where it—whether it's safe here, whether it's safe to fly or gather. I know that families have discussed their fears about the threat of terrorism around the dinner table, many for the first time since September 11. And it's understandable that people worry something similar could happen here. Watching the events in Paris made the threat feel closer to home.

So, as we go into Thanksgiving weekend, I want the American people to know—is that we are taking every possible step to keep our homeland safe. First, we're going after ISIL wherever it hides. That's been our strategy for more than a year. I'll speak about this in more detail in the coming weeks, but let me remind the American people of what our coalition of some 65 nations is doing to destroy these terrorists and defeat their ideology.

So far, our military and our partners have conducted more than 8,000 airstrikes on ISIL strongholds and equipment. Those airstrikes, along with the efforts of our partners on the ground, have taken out key leaders, have taken back territory from ISIL in both Iraq and Syria. We continue to work to choke off their financing and their supply lines and their—counter their recruitment and their messaging.

And even as America is already supporting French airstrikes in Syria, yesterday President Hollande and I agreed that our countries are going to step up that coordination even further and do more of that work together. So we're stepping up the pressure on ISIL where it lives, and we will not let up, adjusting our tactics where necessary, until they are beaten. That's our first goal.

Second, we continue to do everything possible to prevent attacks at home and abroad, and to prevent foreign terrorist fighters from entering the United States or other nations. Since 9/11, we've taken extraordinary measures to strengthen our homeland security, in everything from aviation security to border security to information sharing. We've improved upon these actions over time. Any time there's an event, we learn something from it, and we continue to refine them. We continue to improve upon our approaches as we speak.

Now, right now we know of no specific and credible intelligence indicating a plot on the homeland. And that is based on the latest information I just received in the Situation Room. It is similar to the information that I—the briefing that I received on Saturday before I left on my trip last week.

So, as Americans travel this weekend to be with their loved ones, I want them to know that our counterterrorism, intelligence, homeland security, and law enforcement professionals at every level are working overtime. They are continually monitoring threats at home and abroad, continually evaluating our security posture. They're constantly working to protect all of us.

Their work has prevented attacks. Their efforts have saved lives. They serve every hour of every day for the sake of our security. They did so before Paris, and they do so now, without fanfare or credit and without a break for the holidays.

So the bottom line is this: I want the American people to know, entering the holidays, that the combined resources of our military, our intelligence, and our homeland security agencies are on the case. They're vigilant, relentless, and effective. In the event of a specific, credible threat, the public will be informed. We do think it's useful for people, as they're going about their business, to be vigilant. If you see something suspicious, say something. That's always helpful. But otherwise, Americans should go about their usual Thanksgiving weekend activities: spending time with family and friends and celebrating our blessings.

While the threat of terrorism is a troubling reality of our age, we are both equipped to prevent attacks and we are resilient in the face of those who would try to do us harm. And that's something we can all be thankful for.

Happy Thanksgiving, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:02 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President François Hollande of France. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Also participating in the meeting were National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice; and Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco.

Remarks at the Thanksgiving Turkey Presentation Ceremony
November 25, 2015

The President. Hello, everybody!

Audience members. Hello!

The President. Well, good afternoon. Everybody, have a seat.

[*At this point, the turkey gobbled.*]

The President. Feel free to keep on gobbling. [*Laughter*]

As you may have heard, for months, there has been a fierce competition between a bunch of turkeys trying their—win their way into the White House. [*Laughter*] Some of you caught that. Well, today I can announce that the American people have spoken, and we have two winners. Their names are Honest and Abe. I confess that Honest looks like good eating. But this is a democracy. Abe is now a free bird. He is TOTUS, the Turkey of the United States. [*Laughter*] Yes. Simas, is he attacking you? Are you okay? My political director is getting pecked by TOTUS. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank the Chairman of the National Turkey Federation, Dr. Douglas, as well as farmer Joe Hedden, who personally raised this turkey in California's Central Valley.

America is, after all, a country of second chances, and this turkey has earned a second chance to live out the rest of his life comfortably on 1,000 acres of open land, complete with a barn called the White House on Turkey Hill—[*laughter*]—which actually sounds pretty good.

If for some reason Abe can't fulfill his duties to walk around and gobble all day—[*laughter*]—Honest is in an undisclosed location, ready to serve as the TOTUS—in the TOTUS line of succession.

[*The turkey gobbled.*]

The President. [*Laughter*] Yes. Oh, boy.

Malia Obama. Okay, that's funny.

The President. By the way, can I just—I am going to publicly thank Malia and Sasha for once again standing here with me during the turkey pardon. [*Laughter*] They do this solely because it makes me feel good—[*laughter*]—not because they actually think that this is something I should be doing. [*Laughter*] And of—as you get older, you appreciate when your kids just indulge you like this, so I—I am very grateful.

Where was I? [*Laughter*] Later today Michelle, Malia, Sasha, and I will take some of the less fortunate turkey brothers with us—they will have been packed and frozen—to help serve a Thanksgiving meal to homeless veterans here in DC. And it's a reminder not only of the spirit of giving during this holiday season, but our national obligation to make sure all those who serve and sacrifice [for]* our country have a place to call home. My administration considers this one of our top priorities, making sure that we're bringing about the reality of zero homelessness for our veterans.

And I want to thank Jaindl Turkey Farm in Pennsylvania for donating the turkeys for us to share with others for the seventh year in a row. It is hard to believe that this is my seventh year of pardoning a turkey. Time flies, even if turkeys don't. [*Laughter*]

Sasha Obama. That was good. That was good.

The President. I thought it was pretty good.

Malia Obama. Yes. [*Laughter*]

The President. I——

[*A child in the audience giggled.*]

The President. You think it's funny too, don't you?

I know some folks think this tradition is a little silly. I do not disagree. [*Laughter*] I've got to listen to my critics say I'm often too soft on turkeys. And I'm sure the press is digging into whether or not the turkeys I've pardoned have really rededicated their lives to being good turkey citizens.

But I do enjoy this chance to wish America a happy Thanksgiving. We go through challenging times, and so often, the news of the day can make folks discouraged. But the fact is, is that we live in the greatest country on Earth, and we are blessed in so many ways, most of all, because we have families and friends and people we care about. We look out for each other. We looked out for our neighbors and our friends. We're grateful for the brave men and women of our military who serve all around the world and for the families that miss them. I'm especially grateful to have the privilege and the honor to serve as your President.

So I'm also grateful for the fact that the Bears are going to beat the Packers this weekend.

With that, I hope that everybody has a very, very happy Thanksgiving. And I now am going to go over and, with the power vested in me, officially pardon this turkey.

[*The President left the podium and walked toward the turkey.*]

Foster Farms manager Joe Hedden. All right, you can just stand there.

The President. Are we going to put him on the pardoning table?

[*The President gestured toward his daughters Malia and Sasha.*]

You staying away?

Sasha Obama. Yes.

Malia Obama. Yes.

The President. All right. Yes. All right.

[*As the President gestured with his hand, the turkey gobbled.*]

Don't interrupt. [*Laughter*] By the power vested in me, you are hereby pardoned. Give them—give Abe a big round of applause.

[*The turkey gobbled.*]

Yes. I'm telling you, he's a natural. All right, see you guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:44 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

* White House correction.

Statement on Signing the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016

November 25, 2015

Today I have signed into law S. 1356, the "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016." I vetoed an earlier version of this legislation that failed to authorize funding for our national defense in a fiscally responsible manner. As I noted at the time, my first and most important responsibility, as President and Commander in Chief, is keeping the American people safe. The bill that the Congress originally presented to me was not acceptable. In addition to authorizing inadequate funding for our military, it would have prevented a range of necessary military reforms. It included language that would reenact, and in some cases expand, restrictions concerning the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay that I have repeatedly argued are counterproductive in the fight against terrorism.

Following my veto of the previous bill, the Congress approved—and I have signed into law—the "Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015," which revises discretionary spending caps for fiscal years 2016 and 2017 by providing significant relief from sequestration for both defense and non-defense priorities. The agreement in place helps ensure that relief from sequestration is paid for in a balanced way. The Congress has now revised the National Defense Authorization Act to incorporate these new funding changes and has altered the funding authorization provisions to which I objected. I am therefore signing this annual defense authorization legislation because it includes vital benefits for military personnel and their families, authorities to facilitate ongoing operations around the globe, and important reforms to the military retirement system, as well as partial reforms to other military compensation programs. It also codifies key interrogation-related reforms from Executive Order 13491, which I strongly support.

I am, however, deeply disappointed that the Congress has again failed to take productive action toward closing the detention facility at Guantanamo. Maintaining this site, year after year, is not consistent with our interests as a Nation and undermines our standing in the world. As I have said before, the continued operation of this facility weakens our national security by draining resources, damaging our relationships with key allies and partners, and emboldening violent extremists. It is imperative that we take responsible steps to reduce the population at this facility to the greatest extent possible and close the facility. The population once held at Guantanamo has now been reduced by over 85 percent. Over the past 24 months alone, we have transferred 57 detainees, and our efforts to transfer additional detainees continue. It is long past time for the Congress to lift the restrictions it has imposed and to work with my Administration to responsibly and safely close the facility, bringing this chapter of our history to a close.

The restrictions contained in this bill concerning the detention facility at Guantanamo are, as I have said in the past, unwarranted and counterproductive. Rather than taking steps to close the facility, this bill aims to extend its operation. Section 1032 renews the bar against using appropriated funds to construct or modify any facility in the United States, its territories, or possessions to house any Guantanamo detainee in the custody or under the control of the Department of Defense unless authorized by the Congress. Section 1031 also renews the bar against using appropriated funds to transfer Guantanamo detainees into the United States for any purpose. Sections 1033 and 1034 impose additional restrictions on foreign transfers of detainees—in some cases purporting to bar such transfers entirely. As I have said repeatedly, the executive branch must have the flexibility, with regard to the detainees who remain at Guantanamo, to determine when and where to prosecute them, based on the facts and circumstances of each case and our national security interests, and when and where to transfer them consistent with our national security and our humane treatment policy.

Under certain circumstances, the provisions in this bill concerning detainee transfers would violate constitutional separation of powers principles. Additionally, section 1033 could in some circumstances interfere with the ability to transfer a detainee who has been granted a writ of habeas corpus. In the event that the restrictions on the transfer of detainees in sections 1031, 1033, and 1034 operate in a manner that violates these constitutional principles, my Administration will implement them in a manner that avoids the constitutional conflict.

Finally, I am also disappointed that the Congress failed to enact meaningful reforms to divest unneeded force structure, reduce wasteful overhead, and modernize military healthcare. These reforms are essential to maintaining a strong national defense over the long term. My Administration looks forward to continuing its work with the Congress on these important issues.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
November 25, 2015.

NOTE: S. 1356, approved November 25, was assigned Public Law No. 114–92.

The President's Weekly Address
November 26, 2015

Hi, everybody. In 1620, a small band of pilgrims came to this continent, refugees who had fled persecution and violence in their native land. Nearly 400 years later, we remember their part in the American story, and we honor the men and women who helped them in their time of need.

Thanksgiving is a day for food and football and for hoping the turkey didn't turn out too dry. But it's also a day to count our blessings and give back to others, a reminder that no matter our circumstances, all of us have something to be grateful for. Maybe it's good health, a new addition to the family, or a child taking a next step toward college or a career. Maybe it's a new job or a long-overdue raise. Maybe it's something as simple and as important as the chance to spend time with the people who matter most.

Of course, every American can be thankful for the chance to live in a country founded on the belief that all of us are created equal. And as President, I'm thankful that I get to see the best of America every day: the courage of our troops and veterans, the resilience of our families, and the basic goodness of the ordinary people who call this country home.

On this uniquely American holiday, we also remember that so much of our greatness comes from our generosity. There's the generosity of Americans who volunteer at food banks and shelters, making sure that no one goes hungry on a day when so many plates are full. There's the generosity of Americans who take part not just in Black Friday and Cyber Monday, but Giving Tuesday, recognizing that in the holiday season, what you give is as important as what you get.

And I've been touched by the generosity of the Americans who've written me letters and e-mails in recent weeks, offering to open their homes to refugees fleeing the brutality of ISIL. Now, people should remember that no refugee can enter our borders until they undergo the highest security checks of anyone traveling to the United States. That was the case before Paris, and it's the case now. And what happened in Paris hasn't stopped Americans from opening their arms anyway.

One woman from Pennsylvania wrote me to say: "Money is tight for us in my household. . . . But I have a guest room. I have a pantry full of food. We can do this." Another woman from Florida told me her family's history dates back to the Mayflower, and she said that welcoming others is part of "what it means to be an American."

Nearly four centuries after the Mayflower set sail, the world is still full of pilgrims: men and women who want nothing more than the chance for a safer, better future for themselves and their families. What makes America

America is that we offer that chance. We turn Lady Liberty's light to the world and widen our circle of concern to say that all God's children are worthy of our compassion and care. That's part of what makes this the greatest country on Earth.

I hope that you and your family have a wonderful Thanksgiving, surrounded by loved ones and full of joy and gratitude. And together, may we all play our own small part in the American story and write a next chapter that future generations can be thankful for.

From the Obama family to yours, have a great Thanksgiving.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:25 p.m. on November 25 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on November 26. In the address, the President referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 25, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on November 26.

Statement on the Shooting in Colorado Springs, Colorado
November 28, 2015

The last thing Americans should have to do, over the holidays or any day, is comfort the families of people killed by gun violence, people who woke up in the morning and bid their loved ones goodbye with no idea it would be for the last time. And yet, 2 days after Thanksgiving, that's what we are forced to do again.

We don't yet know what this particular gunman's so-called motive was for shooting 12 people, or for terrorizing an entire community, when he opened fire with an assault weapon and took hostages at a Planned Parenthood center in Colorado. What we do know is that he killed a cop in the line of duty, along with two of the citizens that police officer was trying to protect. We know that law enforcement saved lives, as so many of them do every day, all across America. And we know that more Americans and their families had fear forced upon them.

This is not normal. We can't let it become normal. If we truly care about this—if we're going to offer up our thoughts and prayers again, for God knows how many times, with a truly clean conscience—then we have to do something about the easy accessibility of weapons of war on our streets to people who have no business wielding them. Period. Enough is enough.

May God bless Officer Garrett Swasey and the Americans he tried to save, and may He grant the rest of us the courage to do the same thing.

NOTE: The statement referred to Robert Lewis Dear, suspected gunman in the shooting; and Jennifer Markovsky and Ke'Arre Stewart, who were killed in the shooting.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Xi Jinping of China in Le Bourget, France
November 30, 2015

President Xi. President Obama, it's my great pleasure to see you again. Recently, we met with each other frequently. Here, I want to mention, in particular, the successful state visit that I made to the United States in September this year, and I recall in particular, at the White House, you and your wife, Michelle Obama, extended hospitality to me and my wife. Here, on behalf of my wife, I want to thank you and your wife and the U.S. Government for that.

After my visit, our two teams have been working very hard to make new progress in China-U.S. relations. At the G–20 summit and the APEC meeting, the two sides had good

communication and coordination. The 26th meeting of the JCCT was recently successfully held in Guangzhou, and the first China-U.S. high-level joint dialogue on fighting cybercrime and related issues will soon take place in Washington. In the meantime, the two sides have enjoyed effective coordination and cooperation on economy and trade, mil-to-mil relations, people-to-people ties, as well as important issues such as the Iranian nuclear issue and Syria.

At the present, the world economy is recovering slowly. Terrorism is on the rise, and climate change is an acute challenge. There is more instability and uncertainty in the international situation. Against this backdrop, it's very important for China and the United States to be firmly committed to the right direction of building a new model of major country relations: follow the principle of nonconfrontation and nonconflict; mutual respect; and win-win cooperation; and carry forward our practical exchanges and cooperation at the bilateral, regional, and global levels, which will include enhancing macroeconomic policy coordination, working together to combat all forms of terrorism, and partnering with each other to help the climate conference deliver its expected targets.

In the meantime, it's important that we manage our differences and the sensitive issues in a constructive way. All in all, we need to work together to ensure the sustained, healthy, and a steady growth of our bilateral relations and maintain and promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region and the world at large.

President Obama. Well, thank you, Mr. President. I appreciate very much the opportunity to meet once again with President Xi. As he mentioned, we had a very successful state visit this past year, and we have been able to coordinate our activities during the course of the G–20 and APEC meeting. And nowhere has our coordination been more necessary or more fruitful than the topic that we're here to discuss during the Paris conference, and that is how the world can come together to arrest the pace of climate change.

As the two largest economies in the world and the two largest carbon emitters, we have both determined that it is our responsibility to take action. And since our historic joint announcement of our post-2020 climate targets in Beijing last year, more than 180 countries have followed in announcing their own targets. And so our leadership on this issue has been absolutely vital, and I appreciate President Xi's consistent cooperation on this issue.

The United States and China also come here with a common vision for what's needed in a Paris agreement, including moving toward a low-carbon global economy this century, enhancing transparency to build trust, and robust financial support to help developing countries adapt. And here in Paris, we will be working together to try to deliver on that vision.

We've also been able to set up a number of key forums for us to find additional areas of cooperation through our Strategic and Economic Dialogues and our military-to-military exchanges. We've been able to enhance security, help to strengthen the global economy, and manage conflicts in various hotspots around the world. And I want to particularly express our condolences over the killing of a recent Chinese hostage by ISIL. I think it indicates the degree that this is a threat to all of our nations. And I look forward to discussing how China can play a greater role in addressing this crisis, especially supporting a political transition in Syria and assisting on humanitarian needs, because what's clear is, is that when China is invested in helping to resolve global problems, all of us, including the United States, benefits.

Of course, as President Xi indicated, there are differences between our countries. That's natural. But on issues like cybersecurity and maritime issues, President Xi and I have developed a candid way of discussing these issues, and our teams have found ways to work through these tensions in a constructive fashion. And we hope to build on that today. And I'm also looking forward to President Xi's hosting of the next G–20 meeting in Hangzhou. And that will give us an additional opportunity to work to strengthen the global economy and

to deal with issues like sustainable development and, I think, once again show the world that there's far more that the United States and China have in common than separates us and that when we work together, good things happen.

Xiè xie.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 9:55 a.m. in the bilateral meeting room of the White House delegation space at the Parc des Expositions. In his remarks, he referred to Fan Jinghui, a freelance advertising consultant who was kidnapped and killed by members of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization on November 18. President Xi referred to the U.S.-China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade (JCCT). President Xi spoke in Chinese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Joint Statement by President Obama and President Xi Jinping of China on the United Nations Climate Change Conference
November 30, 2015

President Obama and President Xi met in Paris on November 30 on the opening day of the 21st Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Presidents recognize that the Paris conference presents a crucial opportunity to enhance action to meet this fundamental climate change challenge. They recalled and reaffirmed their November 2014 Joint Announcement on Climate Change, as well as their September 2015 Joint Presidential Statement on Climate Change, which contains a common vision for the Paris Climate Conference. The two sides emphasized their resolve to work together and with others to achieve an ambitious and successful Paris outcome.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks at the First Session of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Le Bourget
November 30, 2015

President Hollande, Mr. Secretary-General, fellow leaders: We have come to Paris to show our resolve. We offer our condolences to the people of France for the barbaric attacks on this beautiful city. We stand united in solidarity not only to deliver justice to the terrorist network responsible for those attacks, but to protect our people and uphold the enduring values that keep us strong and keep us free. And we salute the people of Paris for insisting this crucial conference go on, an act of defiance that proves nothing will deter us from building the future we want for our children. What greater rejection of those who would tear down our world than marshaling our best efforts to save it?

Nearly 200 nations have assembled here this week, a declaration that for all the challenges we face, the growing threat of climate change could define the contours of this century more dramatically than any other. And what should give us hope that this is a turning point—that this is the moment we finally determined we would save our planet—is the fact that our nations share a sense of urgency about this challenge and a growing realization that it is within our power to do something about it.

Our understanding of the ways human beings disrupt the climate advances by the day. Fourteen of the 15 warmest years on record have occurred since the year 2000, and 2015 is on pace to be the warmest year of all. No nation—large or small, wealthy or poor—is immune to what this means.

This summer, I saw the effects of climate change firsthand in our northernmost State, Alaska, where the sea is already swallowing vil-

lages and eroding shorelines, where permafrost thaws and the tundra burns, where glaciers are melting at a pace unprecedented in modern times. And it was a preview of one possible future, a glimpse of our children's fate if the climate keeps changing faster than our efforts to address it: submerged countries, abandoned cities, fields that no longer grow, political disruptions that trigger new conflict, and even more floods of desperate peoples seeking the sanctuary of nations not their own.

That future is not one of strong economies, nor is it one where fragile states can find their footing. That future is one that we have the power to change—right here, right now—but only if we rise to this moment. As one of America's Governors has said, "We are the first generation to feel the impact of climate change and the last generation that can do something about it."

I've come here personally, as the leader of the world's largest economy and the second largest emitter, to say that the United States of America not only recognizes our role in creating this problem, we embrace our responsibility to do something about it.

Over the last 7 years, we've made ambitious investments in clean energy and ambitious reductions in our carbon emissions. We've multiplied wind power threefold, solar power more than twentyfold, helping create parts of America where these clean power sources are finally cheaper than dirtier, conventional power. We've invested in energy efficiency in every way imaginable. We've said no to infrastructure that would pull high-carbon fossil fuels from the ground, and we've said yes to the first-ever set of national standards limiting the amount of carbon pollution our power plants can release into the sky. The advances we've made have helped drive our economic output to alltime highs and drive our carbon pollution to its lowest levels in nearly two decades.

But the good news is, this is not an American trend alone. Last year, the global economy grew while global carbon emissions from burning fossil fuels stayed flat. And what this means can't be overstated. We have broken the old arguments for inaction. We have proved that strong economic growth and a safer environment no longer have to conflict with one another; they can work in concert with one another.

And that should give us hope. One of the enemies that we'll be fighting at this conference is cynicism, the notion we can't do anything about climate change. Our progress should give us hope during these 2 weeks, hope that is rooted in collective action.

Earlier this month in Dubai, after years of delay, the world agreed to work together to cut the superpollutants known as HFCs. That's progress. Already, prior to Paris, more than 180 countries representing nearly 95 percent of global emissions have put forward their own climate targets. That is progress. For our part, America is on track to reach the emissions targets that I set 6 years ago in Copenhagen: We will reduce our carbon emissions in the range of 17 percent below 2005 levels by 2020. And that's why last year I set a new target: America will reduce our emissions 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels within 10 years from now.

So our task here in Paris is to turn these achievements into an enduring framework for human progress, not a stopgap solution, but a long-term strategy that gives the world confidence in a low-carbon future.

Here in Paris, let's secure an agreement that builds in ambition, where progress paves the way for regularly updated targets, targets that are not set for each of us, but by each of us, taking into account the differences that each nation is facing.

Here in Paris, let's agree to a strong system of transparency that gives each of us the confidence that all of us are meeting our commitments. And let's make sure that the countries who don't yet have the full capacity to report on their targets receive the support that they need.

Here in Paris, let's reaffirm our commitment that resources will be there for countries willing to do their part to skip the dirty phase of development. And I recognize this will not be easy. It will take a commitment to innovation and the capital to continue driving down the cost of clean energy. And that's why this

afternoon I'll join many of you to announce an historic joint effort to accelerate public and private clean energy innovation on a global scale.

Here in Paris, let's also make sure that these resources flow to the countries that need help preparing for the impact of climate change that we can no longer avoid. We know the truth that many nations have contributed little to climate change, but will be the first to feel its most destructive effects. For some, particularly island nations, whose leaders I'll meet with tomorrow, climate change is a threat to their very existence. And that's why today, in concert with other nations, America confirms our strong and ongoing commitment to the Least Developed Countries Fund. And tomorrow, we'll pledge new contributions to risk-insurance initiatives that help vulnerable populations rebuild stronger after climate-related disasters.

And finally, here in Paris, let's show businesses and investors that the global economy is on a firm path towards a low-carbon future. If we put the right rules and incentives in place, we'll unleash the creative power of our best scientists and engineers and entrepreneurs to deploy clean energy technologies and the new jobs and new opportunities that they create all around the world. There are hundreds of billions of dollars ready to deploy to countries around the world if they get the signal that we mean business this time. Let's send that signal.

That's what we seek in these next 2 weeks. Not simply an agreement to roll back the pollution we put into our skies, but an agreement that helps us lift people from poverty without condemning the next generation to a planet that's beyond its capacity to repair. Here in Paris, we can show the world what is possible when we come together, united in common effort and by a common purpose.

And let there be no doubt, the next generation is watching what we do. Just over a week ago, I was in Malaysia, where I held a town hall with young people, and the first question I received was from a young Indonesian woman. And it wasn't about terrorism, it wasn't about the economy, it wasn't about human rights. It was about climate change. And she asked whether I was optimistic about what we can achieve here in Paris and what young people like her could do to help.

I want our actions to show her that we're listening. I want our actions to be big enough to draw on the talents of all our people—men and women, rich and poor—I want to show her passionate, idealistic young generation that we care about their future.

For I believe, in the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., that there is such a thing as being too late. And when it comes to climate change, that hour is almost upon us. But if we act here, if we act now, if we place our own short-term interests behind the air that our young people will breathe and the food that they will eat and the water that they will drink and the hopes and dreams that sustain their lives, then we won't be too late for them.

And, my fellow leaders, accepting this challenge will not reward us with moments of victory that are clear or quick. Our progress will be measured differently: in the suffering that is averted and a planet that's preserved. And that's what's always made this so hard. Our generation may not even live to see the full realization of what we do here. But the knowledge that the next generation will be better off for what we do here, can we imagine a more worthy reward than that? Passing that on to our children and our grandchildren, so that when they look back and they see what we did here in Paris, they can take pride in our achievement.

Let that be the common purpose here in Paris: a world that is worthy of our children; a world that is marked not by conflict, but by cooperation, and not by human suffering, but by human progress; a world that's safer and more prosperous and more secure and more free than the one that we inherited.

Let's get to work. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:47 p.m. in La Seine Plenary Hall at the Parc des Expositions. In his remarks, he referred to President François Hollande of France; Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations; and Gov. Jay R. Inslee of Washington.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India in Le Bourget

November 30, 2015

President Obama. Okay, well it is a pleasure to meet with my friend and partner, Prime Minister Modi of India. During my visit to India earlier this year, we committed ourselves to a new, deeper partnership between our nations. And our work here in Paris together represents one of the greatest areas for deeper cooperation, and that is on the issue of climate change.

We agree that it's an urgent threat. The Prime Minister has shown in the work even before he was Prime Minister, at the state level, his interest in new technologies and clean energy. We welcome India's leadership and Prime Minister Modi's leadership on this issue. And Paris is a chance to put in place a lasting framework to address climate at an international level.

I want to emphasize that we agree that Paris must recognize and protect the ability of countries like India to pursue the priorities of development, growth, and poverty eradication. And I know that that is something that is deeply felt by Prime Minister Modi. At the same time, it also has to reflect serious and ambitious action by all nations to curb their carbon pollution. So our teams are working together to achieve these objectives.

And I am proud that after our meeting here, we're going to be attending what we're calling Mission Innovation, which is a groundbreaking new public-private initiative that will accelerate the pace at which we can develop and deploy clean energy that's affordable to populations around the world.

And India has also developed a new Solar Alliance, which is going to be, I think, helping to advance the cause not only in India, but around the world, of accelerating the adaptation of solar energy, which is going to be so important to our clean energy future.

So, Mr. Prime Minister, it's wonderful to see you again, and thank you for your leadership.

Prime Minister Modi. Thank you.

President Obama. Thank you.

[*At this point, Prime Minister Modi spoke in Hindi. An interpreter then translated his remarks as follows.*]

Interpreter. Of my friend and President Obama—is it on? Okay—we are launching ourselves together on a very good mission, and we are working together. With President Obama, I have such a deep relationship that we are able to discuss very openly on all issues and also set out our projects.

This initiative about innovation, in which India too would be present, we are going to be with the United States and work shoulder to shoulder with them in this new initiative. And I'm sure in the times to come, this is going to give very good results.

Secondly, the other very good outcome would be that 121 countries, which are very solar rich and who receive the maximum solar radiation in their countries, are getting together, and a new organization, the International Solar Alliance, is coming into being. In that, the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. Kerry, would be present and—as also the French President.

And so this Solar Alliance and the Mission Innovation, I think this are—these are two very important instruments to fulfill the dreams that we have set ourselves in Paris and to fulfill these in the times to come.

India is a very nature-loving country, and we are setting out, as always, to protect nature in the world. And as you know, Mahatma Gandhi was the biggest champion of nature. And we are going to be making a very important contribution. Our INDCs are also very ambitious. We have set out 175 gigawatt of solar and renewable energy. These are very ambitious targets. And I would just like to once again reiterate that the responsibility that India has will be fully undertaken and fulfilled by it. And we will be working with all countries in the world to ensure that development and protection of the environment go hand in

hand. And we also expect full cooperation from all countries.

Once again, I'd like to express my gratitude to President Obama. We meet very often. We're very good friends. We talk very openly. And I'd just like to thank him.

[*Prime Minister Modi made additional brief remarks in Hindi, and no translation was provided. He then spoke in English as follows.*]

Prime Minister Modi. [*Inaudible*]—strong message: Paris to protect planet. Thank you.

President Obama. There you go. I understood that one. [*Laughter*]

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:41 p.m. in the bilateral meeting room of the White House delegation space at the Parc des Expositions. Prime Minister Modi referred to President François Hollande of France.

Remarks Announcing the Mission Innovation Initiative in Le Bourget
November 30, 2015

Good afternoon. Prime Minister Modi and I apologize for being late, but I can assure you we were working—[*laughter*]—and, hopefully, helping to advance President Hollande's agenda in a successful Paris summit. I want to thank François, my fellow leaders, Prime Minister Modi and Bill Gates—two of the driving forces behind today's announcement.

We're here because we recognize the urgency of climate change and we believe that there's something that we can all do about it as long as we work together. And while the agreement that we seek in Paris will be forged by governments, the ambitious targets that we set for ourselves are going to be reached in large part by the efforts of our scientists, our businesses, our workers, our investors. And that's why the private sector, from inventors to investors, will have a seat at the table throughout this process.

Helping developing nations skip the dirty phase of development is vital to meeting this challenge. One of the things that Prime Minister Modi and I discussed is, you've got 300 million people in India who still don't have electricity. We cannot forge a climate agreement that says they are permanently resigned to not having electricity. That's not an option. So we have to make sure that the same process of development is taking place, but using a whole new set of technologies and arrangements so that we don't have a conflict between development and solving this climate crisis.

But the leap forward is going to take much more than pledges for development assistance from governments. It's going to take private sector efforts and a commitment to innovation and the capital to keep driving down the cost of clean energy all around the world.

And that's why today we're announcing Mission Innovation. And I believe this is going to be one of the most significant public-private partnerships ever forged to accelerate energy innovation on a global scale. First of all, the 20 participating nations, representing more than 80 percent of global clean energy innovation dollars, we're going to seek to double our R&D budget over the next 5 years. Second, a coalition of 28 leading private investors from all over the world, including both Democrats and Republicans from the United States—some folks who have supported me and some folks who haven't always in the past on politics, but do support the climate change agenda—are committing to invest unprecedented resources to bring those technologies to the market.

And we know that this kind of partnership works. I'll give you an example. Shortly after I took office, the United States made the single biggest Federal investment in clean energy in our history. And those investments helped drive down the cost of clean energy faster than anyone thought possible, including me at the time. There are now thousands of private sector renewable energy projects nationwide, projects that employ tens of thousands of

Americans and help drive down our carbon emissions.

Thanks in part to these investments, America now generates 20 times as much solar power as we did in 2008. Last year was solar's biggest year ever. Prices fell by 10 percent, installations climbed by 30 percent, and the solar industry added jobs more than 10 times faster than the rest of the economy.

Now, Bill has pointed out—and he's absolutely right—that we're also going to have to just invent some entirely new technologies. I mean, the truth is, if we adapt existing technologies and make them cheaper and faster and more readily available, if we improve energy efficiency, we're still only going to get part of the way there, and there's still going to be a big gap to fill. And that's where these research dollars become so important. Because we don't yet know exactly what's going to work best. But we know that if we put our best minds behind it and we have the dollars behind it, we'll discover what works. We always have in the past, and we will this time as well.

And there's not a direct correlation between how much money and how quickly we invest—we invent something, but I guarantee you, if we've got more minds working on it with more resources, the likelihood that we come up with an answer faster is going to be much higher.

So, between Federal investments in these technologies and the private capital that helped scale up and deploy them, we already have places in America where the power from sun and wind is cheaper than dirtier, conventional power from utilities. Now, there are issues in terms of distribution and storage and batteries, but the point is, is that we've seen more progress than we would have even imagined 7, 8 years ago. And we're already seeing America's biggest companies—like Apple, Google, Microsoft, Walmart—who have become some of the world's largest purchasers of clean energy. And they're also, in some cases, becoming some of the largest clean energy producers in the world. And they're doing this not just because it's the right thing to do, but because it makes good business sense.

And by taking this approach on a global scale—with unprecedented investment in public research, an unprecedented pool of private capital—Mission Innovation will help deliver affordable clean energy and new jobs and opportunities to people around the world for decades to come. This is how we're going to solve this challenge: together. And that's at the heart of what we're trying to accomplish here in Paris.

So I want to thank everybody for joining us. I especially want to thank Prime Minister Modi, who has been at the forefront in pursuing innovation that can help his country develop, but every country develop. And I want to thank Bill Gates, who has been visionary in this entire process and helped to gather the investors that are already stepping up. My expectation, knowing Bill, is, is that we'll see a lot more than 28 pretty soon.

So thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:12 p.m. in the Nelson Mandela Auditorium at the Parc des Expositions. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India; President François Hollande of France; and William H. Gates III, founder, technology adviser, and board member, Microsoft Corp.

Message to the Congress Transmitting an Alternative Pay Plan for Civilian Federal Employees

November 30, 2015

To the Congress of the United States:

I am transmitting an alternative plan for pay increases for civilian Federal employees covered by the General Schedule and certain other pay systems in January 2016.

Title 5, United States Code, authorizes me to implement alternative pay plans for pay

increases for civilian Federal employees covered by the General Schedule and certain other pay systems if, because of "national emergency or serious economic conditions affecting the general welfare," I view the adjustments that would otherwise take effect as inappropriate.

Civilian Federal employees have already made significant sacrifices as a result of 3-year pay freeze that ended in January 2014. In January 2014 and again in January 2015, increases for civilian Federal employees were limited to a 1.0 percent overall pay increase, an amount lower than the private sector pay increases and statutory formula for adjustments to the base General Schedule for 2014 and 2015. However, as the country's economic recovery continues, we must maintain efforts to keep our Nation on a sustainable fiscal course. This is an effort that continues to require tough choices.

Under current law, locality pay increases averaging 28.74 percent and costing $26 billion would go into effect in January 2016. Federal agency budgets cannot sustain such increases. Accordingly, I have determined that under the authority of section 5304a of title 5, United States Code, locality-based comparability payments for the locality pay areas established by the President's Pay Agent, in the amounts set forth in the attached table, shall become effective on the first day of the first applicable pay period beginning on or after January 1, 2016. These rates are based on an allocation of 0.3 percent of payroll as indicated in my August 28, 2015, alternative pay plan for adjustments to the base General Schedule. These decisions will not materially affect our ability to attract and retain a well-qualified Federal workforce.

The adjustments described above shall take effect on the first applicable pay period beginning on or after January 1, 2016.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
November 30, 2015.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey in Paris, France

December 1, 2015

President Obama. Okay. Even though President Erdogan and I had a chance to see each other in Antalya recently at the G–20. In light of recent events, we thought it would be useful for us to discuss what's been happening both in Syria and the recent events between Russia and Turkey.

I want to be very clear: Turkey is a NATO ally. Along with our allies, the United States supports Turkey's right to defend itself and its airspace and its territory. And we're very much committed to Turkey's security and its sovereignty.

We discussed how Turkey and Russia can work together to deescalate tensions and find a diplomatic path to resolve this issue. And as I mentioned to President Erdogan, we all have a common enemy, and that is ISIL. And I want to make sure that we focus on that threat, and I want to make sure that we remain focused on the need to bring about some sort of political resolution in Syria.

In partnership with Turkey and our other coalition partners, we've been able to push ISIL's control of certain territories inside of Iraq and inside of Syria. We have more work to do. Turkey has been extraordinarily generous when it comes to its support of refugees. And I was glad to hear that they've had a productive meeting with the EU about how not only can border security be strengthened, but also additional resources for humanitarian support can be forthcoming.

And we are very much interested in accelerating the work that's been taking place on our military-to-military relationship to ensure that not only Turkey is safe and secure, but also that Syria can finally begin winding down what has been a terribly costly war and we can focus

our attention on ensuring that ISIL is no longer a threat to all of us.

So, Tayyip, I appreciate very much the meeting. And I'm sure that our teams will be in close consultation over the next several weeks.

[*At this point, an interpreter translated President Obama's remarks into Turkish.*]

President Obama. And I apologize to the translator for not having broken that up. [*Laughter*]

President Erdogan. My dear friend, Obama, first and foremost, I would like to thank you for this meeting. And we have concentrated our efforts in discussing fundamental topics; some of them to name are as the following.

First and foremost, we've discussed several issues surrounding the struggle—the joint struggle—against the ISIL terrorism in Syria. As the coalition forces, we are determined to keep up the fight against ISIS and ISIS forces on the ground. And we have discussed the situation from different aspects within Syria in a detailed fashion.

And as a second topic, we've concentrated our efforts in discussing the recent tensions between Russia and Turkey. Of course, we are always willing to resort to the diplomatic language, because the diplomatic language will be sufficient in order to resolve the problems in the region. Because we don't want to invest in tensions; we want to avoid the tensions. We don't want to get hurt, and we don't want no one to get hurt, because if a tension arises in the region, all of the parties involved get damaged at the end. We want peace to prevail at all costs, and we want the peace which would prevail to contribute to the peace which would be established in the region at a larger extent.

And of course, with regards to the resolution of the problems in Syria, we've discussed the transitional government—the establishment of the transitional government, especially in the aftermath of the already successfully undertaken Vienna process. We are, so far, very happy to see the developments in that regard, and we hope and pray that the end results out of the Vienna process to be cultivated will provide a heave of—sigh of relief for the entire region and for Syria.

And as a fourth topic, we focused on the Turkomans, which are the Turkish descendants in Syria. We know that where the Turkomans are present, there's no Daesh presence or ISIS presence. As I've said before, they are the Turkish descendants; they are the relatives of the Republic of Turkey. And that area is continuously bombed. In the last few weeks, more than 500 civilians were killed, so we would like to see the resolution of that problem as soon as possible as well.

And I would like to thank you once again for this time and for this opportunity.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. at the U.S. Ambassador's residence. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, also known as ISIS or Daesh. President Erdogan spoke in Turkish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks During a Meeting With Leaders of Small Island Nations in Issy-les-Moulineaux, France
December 1, 2015

It's been a great pleasure to meet with several of the leaders of island nations who are vital to the work that we're doing here in Paris. Their populations are among the most vulnerable to the ravages of climate change. If sea levels rise at currently projected levels, or the pace that is currently projected, some of their people will be forced to flee their homes. Some of their nations could disappear entirely. And as weather patterns change, we might deal with tens of millions of climate refugees from the Asia-Pacific region.

And as I mentioned to my friends around the table, I'm an island boy. I grew up on an island and understand both the beauty, but also the fragility of island ecosystems. I spent time

in Indonesia, a large developing country where you could see how shifts in climate could have extraordinarily destructive effects. And so the views of these smaller nations, their voice in these negotiations, will be absolutely vital.

And one of the things that we've heard—the consensus between the United States and these small island nations—is that we have to have an ambitious agreement; that although the targets themselves may not have the force of treaties, the process, the procedures that ensure transparency and periodic reviews, that needs to be legally binding, and that's going to be critical in us having high ambitions and holding each other accountable for those ambitions; that the climate financing has to reflect the unique needs of the most vulnerable countries in how it operates, and that those pledges have to be real.

And as part of the effort to make sure that the United States is doing its part, even ahead of the Paris agreement, we've already begun to take some steps and work with both individual countries, as well as some multilateral organizations, to deal with the damage and problems that are already occurring as a consequence of climate change.

To give you one example, the United States is making new contributions to risk-insurance initiatives aimed at helping more people in vulnerable nations, including Pacific Island nations, respond to the worst impacts of climate change. And this demonstrates our commitment to make good on the goal that we set this summer at the G–7 to provide this kind of risk insurance to another 400 million people. And we're joining with other donor nations in setting up these kinds of structures.

The bottom line is this. The nations that are represented by the leaders who are here today, they're not the most populous nations. They don't have big armies, may not have the most influence in international organizations. But as Prime Minister O'Neill indicated from Papua New Guinea, they have a right to the dignity and sense of place and continuity of culture that everybody else does. And their voice is vital in making sure that the kind of agreement that emerges here in Paris is not just serving the interests of the most powerful, but is serving the interests of the most vulnerable as well.

And the United States intends to stand with them as a partner in this process. We know that negotiations will be difficult. And by the way, we know that even with an optimistic outcome here in Paris, that we'll still have more work to do in order to ultimately achieve the goals that scientists say we need to achieve to avert catastrophic damage. But this is the place to start.

And I just want to thank the leaders who have been a part of this conversation. I'm encouraged by the general consensus that we were able to achieve. And we want to send our negotiators off with a sense that they have the strong support of their leadership behind them.

So thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:44 p.m. at the OECD Development Centre. Participating in the meeting were President Anote Tong of Kiribati; President Christopher Jorebon Loeak of the Marshall Islands; Prime Minister Peter Paire O'Neill of Papua New Guinea; Prime Minister Kenny Anthony of Saint Lucia; and Prime Minister Freundel Stuart of Barbados. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 3.

The President's News Conference in Issy-les-Moulineaux
December 1, 2015

The President. Good afternoon. Once again, I want to thank the people of France and President Hollande for their extraordinary hospitality. Hosting nearly 200 nations is an enormous task for anybody, but to do so just 2 weeks after the terrorist attacks here is a remarkable display of resolve.

And that's why the first place I visited when I arrived on Sunday night was the Bataclan so that I could pay my respects on behalf of the

American people, who share the French people's resolve. It was a powerful reminder of the awful human toll of those attacks. Our hearts continue to go out to the victims' families.

But here in Paris, we also see the resilience of the universal values that we share: *liberté, égalité, fraternité.* And based on my discussions with President Hollande and other leaders, I am confident that we can continue building momentum and adding resources to our effort to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL, to disrupt plots against America and our allies, and to bring about the political resolution necessary to resolve the situation in Syria and relieve the hardships on the Syrian people.

Now, this has been a quick visit. Of course, all visits to Paris seem quick; you always want to stay a little bit longer. But we have accomplished a lot here, and I have high hopes that over the next 2 weeks, we'll accomplish even more.

I know some have asked why the world would dedicate some of our focus right now to combating climate change even as we work to protect our people and go after terrorist networks. The reason is because this one trend—climate change—affects all trends. If we let the world keep warming as fast as it is and sea levels rising as fast as they are and weather patterns keep shifting in more unexpected ways, then before long, we are going to have to devote more and more and more of our economic and military resources not to growing opportunity for our people, but to adapting to the various consequences of a changing planet. This is an economic and security imperative that we have to tackle now. And great nations can handle a lot at once.

America is already leading on many issues, and climate is no different. We've made significant progress at home: increasing production of clean energy, working to reduce emissions, while our businesses have kept creating jobs for 68 straight months. And we've been able to lower our unemployment rate to 5 percent in the process. And since we worked with China last year to show that the two largest economies and two largest emitters can cooperate on climate, more than 180 countries have followed our lead in announcing their own targets.

The task that remains here in Paris is to turn these achievements into an enduring framework for progress that gives the world confidence in a low-carbon future. As I said yesterday, what we seek is an agreement where progress paves the way for countries to update their emissions targets on a regular basis and each nation has the confidence that other nations are meeting their commitments. We seek an agreement that makes sure developing nations have the resources they need to skip the dirty phase of development if they're willing to do their part and that makes sure the nations most vulnerable to climate change have resources to adapt to the impacts we can no longer avoid.

We seek an agreement that gives businesses and investors the certainty that the global economy is on a firm path towards a low-carbon future, because that will spur the kind of investment that will be vital to combine reduced emissions with economic growth.

And that's the goal: not just an agreement to roll back the pollution that threatens our planet, but an agreement that helps our economies grow and our people to thrive without condemning the next generation to a planet that is beyond its capacity to repair.

Now, all of this will be hard. Getting 200 nations to agree on anything is hard. And I'm sure there will be moments over the next 2 weeks where progress seems stymied and everyone rushes to write that we are doomed. But I'm convinced that we're going to get big things done here. Keep in mind, nobody expected that 180 countries would show up in Paris with serious climate targets in hand. Nobody expected that the price of clean energy would fall as fast as it has or that back in the United States, the solar industry would be creating jobs 10 times faster than the rest of the economy. Nobody expected that more than 150 of America's biggest companies would pledge their support to an ambitious Paris outcome or that a couple of dozen of the world's wealthiest private citizens would join here—join us here to pledge to invest unprecedented

resources to bring clean energy technologies to market faster.

What gives me confidence that progress is possible is somebody like Bill Gates, who I was with yesterday, understands that tackling climate change is not just a moral imperative, it's an opportunity. Without batting an eye, he said we're just going to have to go ahead and invent some new technologies to tackle this challenge. That kind of optimism, that kind of sense that we can do what is necessary is infectious. And you tend to believe somebody like Bill when he says that we're going to get it done, since he's done some pretty remarkable things. And I believe that a successful 2 weeks here could give the world that same kind of optimism that the future is ours to shape.

So, with that, I'm going to take a few questions. We'll start with Jerome Cartillier of AP [AFP, Agence France-Presse].* Where's Jerome? There he is.

Russia/Syria/Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization

Q. Good morning, sir, and thank you, Mr. President. For months now, you've been asking Mr. Putin to play basically a more constructive role in Syria, basically shifting from defending Asad to attacking ISIL. It appears your calls have not been heard. What's your strategy going forward?

The President. Well, I'm not sure that's true. The fact that the Vienna process is moving forward steadily—not conclusively, but steadily—I think is an indication that Mr. Putin recognizes there is not going to be a military resolution to the situation in Syria.

The Russians now have been there for several weeks, over a month, and I think fair-minded reporters who have looked at the situation would say that the situation hasn't changed significantly. In the interim, Russia has lost a commercial passenger jet. You've seen another jet shot down. There have been losses in terms of Russian personnel. And I think Mr. Putin understands that, with Afghanistan fresh in the memory, for him to simply get bogged down in a inconclusive and paralyzing civil conflict is not the outcome that he's looking for.

Now, where we continue to have an ongoing difference is not on the need for a political settlement, it's the issue of whether Mr. Asad can continue to serve as President while still bringing the civil war to an end. It's been my estimation for 5 years now that that's not possible. Regardless of how you feel about Mr. Asad—and I consider somebody who kills hundreds of thousands of his own people illegitimate—but regardless of the moral equation, as a practical matter, it is impossible for Mr. Asad to bring that country together and to bring all the parties into an inclusive government. It is possible, however, to preserve the Syrian state, to have an inclusive government in which the interests of the various groups inside of Syria are represented.

And so, as part of the Vienna process, you're going to see the opposition groups—the moderate opposition groups that exist within Syria, some of which, frankly, we don't have a lot in common with, but do represent significant factions inside of Syria, they'll be coming together in order for them to form at least a negotiating unit or process that can move Vienna forward.

And we're going to just keep on working at this. And my hope and expectation is, is that political track will move at the same time as we continue to apply greater and greater pressure on ISIL.

And with the contributions that the French have made, the Germans have recently announced additional resources to the fight, the Brits have been steady partners in Iraq and, I think, are now very interested in how they can expand their efforts to help deal with ISIL inside of Syria—with not just the cohesion of the coalition that the United States put together, but also the increasing intensity of our actions in the air and progressively on the ground, I think it is possible over the next several months that we both see a shift in calculation in the

* White House correction.

Russians and a recognition that it's time to bring the civil war in Syria to a close.

It's not going to be easy. Too much blood has been shed, too much infrastructure has been destroyed, too many people have been displaced, for us to anticipate that it will be a smooth transition. And ISIL is going to continue to be a deadly organization—because of its social media, the resources that it has, and the networks of experienced fighters that it possesses—it's going to continue to be a serious threat for some time to come. But I'm confident that we are on the winning side of this and that, ultimately, Russia is going to recognize the threat that ISIL poses to its country, to its people, is the most significant and that they need to align themselves with those of us who are fighting ISIL.

Justin Sink [Bloomberg News].

Russia/Syria/Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/Climate Change

Q. Thanks, Mr. President. I guess I wanted to follow on that shift in calculation that you discussed with—in terms of President Putin. Did you receive assurances from either him or President Hollande, who said earlier this week that President Putin had told him he would only target jihadis and ISIS, that that will be the focus of Russia's military campaign going forward?

And then, separately, I just wanted to ask about climate. The outstanding issue seems to be whether Republicans who have kind of voiced opposition to your agenda could somehow submarine funding for the Green Climate Fund. That's a pretty crucial part here. So I'm wondering both how you prevent that in the upcoming appropriations process, and if you're at all concerned about what Senator McConnell said earlier today or yesterday that a future Republican President could undo what you're trying to accomplish here in Paris.

The President. First of all, on Mr. Putin, I don't expect that they're—you're going to see a 180-turn on their strategy over the next several weeks. They have invested for years now in keeping Asad in power. Their presence there is predicated on propping him up. And so that's going to take some time for them to change how they think about the issue.

And so long as they are aligned with the regime, a lot of Russian resources are still going to be targeted at opposition groups that ultimately are going to end up being part of an inclusive government that we support or other members of the coalition support and are fighting the regime and fighting ISIL at the same time. So I don't think we should be under any illusions that somehow Russia starts hitting only ISIL targets. That's not happening now. It was never happening. It's not going to be happening in the next several weeks.

What can happen is if the political process that John Kerry has so meticulously stitched together—in concert with Foreign Minister Lavrov of Russia—if that works in Vienna, then it's possible, given the existing accord that the parties have already agreed to, that we start seeing at least pockets of cease-fires in and around Syria. That may mean then that certain opposition groups no longer find themselves subject to either Syrian or Russian bombing; they are then in a conversation about politics. And slowly, we then are able to get everybody's attention diverted to where it needs to be, and that is going after ISIL in a systematic way.

With respect to climate and what's taking place here, I don't want to get ahead of ourselves. We still need a Paris agreement. And so my main focus is making sure that the United States is a leader in bringing a successful agreement home here in Paris. And there are a number of components to it. So I just want to repeat so that everybody understands what we will consider success several weeks from now.

Number one, that it is an ambitious target that seeks a low-carbon global economy over the course of this century. That means that countries have put forward specific targets, and although those are self-generating, there is a mechanism in which they are presenting to the world confirmation that they are working on those targets, meeting on those targets. So there's a single transparency mechanism that all countries are adhering to and that those are legally binding; that there's periodic reviews so that as the science changes and as technology

changes, 5 years from now, 10 years from now, 15 years from now, in each successive cycle, countries can update the pledges that they make; and that we've got a climate fund that helps developing countries to not only adapt and mitigate, but also leapfrog over dirty power generation in favor of clean energy.

And if we hit those targets, then we will have been successful. Not because, by the way, the pledges alone will meet the necessary targets for us to prevent catastrophic climate change, but because we will have built the architecture that's needed. We will have established a global consensus of how we're going to approach the problem. And then, we can successfully turn up the dials as new sources of energy become available, as the unit costs for something like solar or improvements in battery technology make it easier for us to meet even higher targets. And systematically, we can drive down carbon emissions and the pace of climate change over the course of several decades.

So I want to emphasize this because I've—I know that in some of the reporting—if you add up all the pledges and they were all met right now, we would be at a estimated 2.7 centigrade increase in temperature. That's too high. We wanted to get 2 centigrade or even lower than that. But if we have these periodic reviews built in, what I believe will happen is that by sending that signal to researchers and scientists and investors and entrepreneurs and venture funds, we'll actually start hitting these targets faster than we expected, and we can be even more ambitious. And so when you look at the cumulative targets that may exist 10 years from now, we may well be within the 2-percent centigrade increase.

And by the way, that's not just foolish optimism. When you look at the experience of the United States, for example, I came into office, I prioritized clean energy, I said we're going to double our clean energy production. Through the Recovery Act, we recognized that making these big investments were also good for the economy and helping us get out of recession and could create jobs. So we made a big investment, and it turned out that we met our goals a lot quicker than we expected.

If you had asked me when I first came into office my expectations for the price of solar-generated power versus traditional coal- or other fossil fuel–generated power, I would say we would make some progress, but that solar would still require substantial subsidies in order to be economical. The cost of solar has gone down much faster than any of us would have predicted even 5 years ago.

So the key here is to set up the structure so that we're sending signals all around the world: This is happening. We're not turning back. And the thing about human ingenuity—I was going to say American ingenuity—[*laughter*]—but there are other smart folks around too, don't want to be too parochial about this—the thing about human ingenuity is, is that it responds when it gets a strong signal of what needs to be done.

The old expression that necessity is the mother of invention—well, this is necessary. And us getting a strong, high-ambition agreement in place, even if it doesn't meet all the goals that we ultimately need to meet, sends a signal that it's necessary and that will spur on the innovation that's going to ultimately meet our goals.

Nancy Benac [Associated Press].

Climate Change/U.S. Leadership/Shooting in Colorado Springs, Colorado/Planned Parenthood

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. One follow-up on the climate change issue. Are you confident that you can hold the U.S. to its commitments under the—under existing treaties with no new vote needed? And separately, on Planned Parenthood, I wondered if you could share your thoughts on that shooting and any thoughts in the context of the sharp political rhetoric in the country at this time.

The President. I apologize, Justin, I didn't address that, but fortunately, Nancy was batting cleanup after you.

On the issue of the climate fund, we already engage in assistance to countries for adaptation, mitigation, sharing technology that can help them meet their energy needs in a clean way. And so this is not just one slug of funding that happens in 1 year, this is multiyear com-

mitments that, in many cases, are already embedded in a whole range of programs that we have around the world. And my expectation is, is that we will absolutely be able to meet our commitments.

This is part of American leadership, by the way. And this is part of the debate that we have to have in the United States more frequently. For some reason, too often in Washington, American leadership is defined by whether or not we're sending troops somewhere, and that's the sole definition of leadership. And part of what I've been trying to describe during the course of my Presidency is that where we make the most impact—and where, by the way, we strengthen our relationships and influence the most—is when we are helping to organize the world around a particular problem.

Now, because we're the largest country, because we have the most powerful military, we should welcome the fact that we're going to do more and oftentimes we're going to do it first. So, during the Ebola response, other countries could not respond until we had set up the infrastructure to allow other countries to respond and until we had made the call and showed that we were going to make that investment.

The same was true with respect to making sure that Iran didn't get a nuclear weapon. We had to lead the way, but ultimately, because we reached out and brought our allies and partners together, we were able to achieve goals that we could not have achieved by ourselves.

The same is true with climate. When I made the announcement in Beijing with President Xi, I was able to do so in part because we had led domestically so I could put my money where my mouth was, and I said, here are the tough political decisions we're making, now what are you going to do? And once we were able to get China involved, that gave confidence to other countries that we were in a position to make a difference as well, or—and that they needed to be involved in the process as well.

So, whether it's organizing the coalition that's fighting ISIL or dealing with climate change, our role is central, but on large international issues like this, it's not going to be sufficient, at least not if we want it to take, if we want it to sustain itself. We've got to have partners. And that's the kind of leadership that we should aspire to.

With respect to Planned Parenthood, obviously my heart goes out to the families of those impacted. I mean, Nancy, I say this every time we've got a—one of these mass shootings. This just doesn't happen in other countries.

We are rightly determined to prevent terrorist attacks wherever they occur, whether in the United States or with friends and allies like France. And we devote enormous resources—and properly so—to rooting out networks and debilitating organizations like ISIL and maintaining the intelligence and improving the information sharing that can identify those who would try to kill innocent people. And yet, in the United States, we have the power to do more to prevent what is just a regular process of gun homicides that is unequalled by multiples of 5, 6, 10.

And I think the American people understand that. So my hope is, is that, once again, this spurs a conversation and action. And I will continue to present those things that I can do administratively. But in the end of the day, Congress, States, local governments are going to have to act in order to make sure that we're preventing people who are deranged or have violent tendencies from getting weapons that can magnify the damage that they do.

And with respect to Planned Parenthood, I think it's clear—I've said it before—they provide health services to women all across the country. Have for generations. In many cases, it's the only organization that provides health services to impoverished women. And I think it's fair to have a legitimate, honest debate about abortion. I don't think that's something that is beyond the pale of our political discussion, I think that's a serious, legitimate issue. How we talk about it—making sure that we're talking about it factually, accurately, and not demonizing organizations like Planned Parenthood—I think is important.

Jeff Mason [Reuters].

2016 Presidential Election/Climate Change/Turkey/Syria

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Do you believe that Turkey is doing enough to strengthen its northwest border with Syria? How is it that a NATO country with as large a military as Turkey has has not sealed this border? And is that something that you raised today with President Erdogan?

And then, to put a finer point on the climate change question, can leaders gathered here believe that the United States will keep its commitments, even after you've left office, if a Republican succeeds you in the White House?

The President. Just with respect to my successor, let me, first of all, say that I'm anticipating a Democrat succeeding me. [*Laughter*] I'm confident in the wisdom of the American people on that front.

But even if somebody from a different party succeeded me, one of the things that you find is when you're in this job, you think about it differently than when you're just running for the job. And what you realize is what I mentioned earlier, that American leadership involves not just playing to a narrow constituency back home, but you now are, in fact, at the center of what happens around the world and that your credibility and America's ability to influence events depends on taking seriously what other countries care about.

Now, the fact of the matter is, there's a reason why you have the largest gathering of world leaders probably in human history here in Paris. Everybody else is taking climate change really seriously. They think it's a really big problem. It spans political parties. I mean, you travel around Europe, and you talk to leaders of governments and the opposition, and they are arguing about a whole bunch of things; one thing they're not arguing about is whether the science of climate change is real and whether or not we have to do something about it.

So whoever is the President—next President of the United States, if they come in and they suggest somehow that that global consensus—not just 99.5 percent of scientists and experts, but 99 percent of world leaders—think this is really important, I think the President of the United States is going to need to think this is really important. And that's why it's important for us to not project what's being said on a campaign trail, but to do what's right and make the case.

And I would note that the American people, I think in the most recent survey, two-thirds of them said America should be a signatory to any agreement that emerges that is actually addressing climate change in a serious way. So the good news is, the politics inside the United States is changing as well. Sometimes, it may be hard for Republicans to support something that I'm doing, but that's more a matter of the games Washington plays. And that's why I think people should be confident that we'll meet our commitments on this.

With respect to Turkey, I have had repeated conversations with President Erdogan about the need to close the border between Turkey and Syria. We've seen some serious progress on that front, but there are still some gaps. In particular, there's about 98 kilometers that are still used as a transit point for foreign fighters, ISIL shipping out fuel for sale that helps finance their terrorist activities.

And so we have been having our militaries work together to determine how a combination of air and Turkish ground forces on the Turkish side of the border can do a much better job of sealing the border than currently is. And I think President Erdogan recognizes that. I'm also encouraged by the fact that President Erdogan and the EU had a series of meetings around—or Turkey and the EU had a series of meetings around the issue of the Turkish-Greek border.

We have to remind ourselves, Turkey has taken on an enormous humanitarian effort. There are millions of Syrians who are displaced and living inside of Turkey. Not just refugee camps, but they are now moving into major cities throughout Turkey. That puts enormous strains on their infrastructure, on their housing, on employment. And Turkey has continued to keep those borders open for people in real need.

So I'm proud that the United States is the single largest contributor of humanitarian aid for Syrian refugees. I'm glad that the EU is looking to do more to help Turkey manage those refugee flows. But I also think the EU rightly wants to see the kind of orderly process along the Turkish-Greek border that's necessary for Europe to be able to regulate the amount of refugees it's absorbing and to save the lives of refugees who are oftentimes taking enormous risks because they're being ferried back and forth by human traffickers who are now operating in the same ways that you see drug traffickers operating under: at enormous profit and without regard for human life.

Q. Did you raise the border issue with him today?

The President. I—we talked about it today, but I guess what I'm saying, Jeff, is this has been an ongoing conversation. We've recognized that this is a central part of our anti-ISIL strategy. We've got to choke them off. We have to choke off how they make money. We've got to choke off their ability to bring in new fighters. Because we've taken tens of thousands of their fighters off the battlefield, but if new ones are still coming in, then they continue to maintain a stranglehold over certain population centers inside of Iraq or Syria. So we've got to cut off their source of new fighters.

That's also part of the great danger for Europe, and ultimately the United States as well, and countries as far flung as Australia or Singapore. If you've got foreign fighters coming in that are getting not only ideologically hardened, but battle hardened, and then they're returning to their home countries, they're likely candidates for engaging in the kind of terrorist attacks that we saw here in Paris.

So this has been an ongoing concern, and we're going to continue to push hard among all our allies to cut off the financing, cut off the foreign fighters, improve our intelligence gathering, which has allowed us to accelerate the strikes that we're taking against ISIL.

A lot of the discussion over the last couple of weeks was the pace of airstrikes. The pace of airstrikes is not constrained by the amount of planes or missiles that we have, the pace has been dictated by how many effective targets do we have. And our intelligence continues to improve. And the better we get at that, the better we're going to be at going after them.

Scott Horsley [NPR].

Market-Based Carbon Emissions Reduction Policies/Climate Change

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. In terms of sending that market signal you talked about today and a couple of times this week, I wonder if you see any political path back home towards putting an explicit price on carbon.

The President. I have long believed that the most elegant way to drive innovation and to reduce carbon emissions is to put a price on it. This is a classic market failure. Right? If you open up an Econ 101 textbook, it will say the market is very good about determining prices and allocating capital towards its most productive use, except, there are certain externalities, there are certain things that the market just doesn't count, it doesn't price, at least not on its own. Clean air is an example. Clean water—or the converse—dirty water, dirty air.

In this case, the carbons that are being sent up that originally we didn't have the science to fully understand—we do now. And if that's the case, if you put a price on it, then the entire market would respond. And the best investments and the smartest technologies would begin scrubbing, effectively, our entire economy.

But it's difficult. And so I think that as the science around climate change is more accepted, as people start realizing that even today you can put a price on the damage that climate change is doing—all right, you go down to Miami, and when it's flooding at high tide on a sunny day and fish are swimming through the middle of the streets, that—there's a cost to that. Insurance companies already are beginning to realize that in terms of how they price risk. And the more the market on its own starts putting a price on it because of risk, it may be that the politics around setting up a cap-and-trade system, for example, shifts as well.

Obviously, I'm not under any illusion that this Congress will impose something like that. But it is worth remembering that it was

conservatives and Republicans and center-right think tanks that originally figured out this was a smarter way to deal with pollution than a command-and-control system. And it was folks like George H.W. Bush and his EPA that effectively marshaled this approach to deal with acid raid. We ended up solving it a lot faster, a lot cheaper than anybody had anticipated.

And I guess, more than anything, that's the main message I want to send here, is climate change is a massive problem. It is a generational problem. It's a problem that, by definition, is just about the hardest thing for any political system to absorb, because the effects are gradual, they're diffuse, people don't feel it immediately, and so there's not a lot of constituency pressure on politicians to do something about it right away. It kind of creeps up on you. You've got the problem of the commons, and you've got to get everybody doing it. Because if just one nation is helping, but the other nations aren't doing it, then it doesn't do any good. So you have this huge coordination problem and the danger of free riders. So you—on all these dimensions, it's hard to come up with a tougher problem than climate change or a more consequential problem.

And yet, despite all that, the main message I've got is, I actually think we're going to solve this thing. If you had said to people as recently as 2 years ago that we'd have 180 countries showing up in Paris with pretty ambitious targets for carbon reduction, most people would have said you're crazy, that's a pipe dream. And yet here we are. That's already happened. Before the agreement is even signed, that's already happened.

As I said earlier, if you had told folks what the cost of generating solar energy would be today relative to what it was 5 years ago, people would have said, not a chance. And with relatively modest inputs, that's already happening. I mean, imagine if we're starting to put more R&D dollars into it, which is why the Mission Innovation announcement was so significant: the biggest countries, the most prosperous countries doubling their R&D, but then you've also got Bill Gates and other extraordinarily wealthy individuals saying we're going to put our money into this.

I'm optimistic. I think we're going to solve it. I think the issue is just going to be the pace and how much damage is done before we are able to fully apply the brakes.

And in some ways, it's akin to the problem of terrorism and ISIL. In the immediate aftermath of a terrible attack like happened here in Paris, sometimes, it's natural for people to despair. But look at Paris. You can't tear down Paris because of the demented actions of a handful of individuals. The beauty, the joy, the life, the culture, the people, the diversity—that's going to win out every time.

But we have to be steady in applying pressure to the problem. We have to keep on going at it. We have to see what works. When something doesn't work, we have to change our approach. But most of all, we have to push away fear and have confidence that human innovation, our values, our judgment, our solidarity—it will win out.

And I guess I've been at this long enough where I have some cause for confidence. We went, what, a month, month and a half, where people were pretty sure that Ebola was going to kill us all? [*Laughter*] Well, nobody asks me about it anymore. And although we still see flickers of it in West Africa, we set up an entire global health security agenda—part of American leadership—to deal not only with Ebola, but to deal with the possibility of future pandemics. It's not easy. It takes time. And when you're in the midst of it, it's frightening. But it's solvable.

All right? With that, I'm going to go home. *Vive la France!* Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 2:08 p.m. at the OECD Development Centre. In his remarks, the President referred to William H. Gates III, founder, technology adviser, and board member, Microsoft Corp.; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; President Bashar al-Asad of Syria; and former President George H.W. Bush.

Statement on the 60th Anniversary of the Montgomery Bus Boycott
December 1, 2015

Rosa Parks held no elected office. She was not born into wealth or power. Yet, 60 years ago today, Rosa Parks changed America. Refusing to give up a seat on a segregated bus was the simplest of gestures, but her grace, dignity, and refusal to tolerate injustice helped spark a civil rights movement that spread across America. Just a few days after Rosa Parks' arrest in Montgomery, Alabama, a little-known, 26-year-old pastor named Martin Luther King, Jr., stood by her side, along with thousands of her fellow citizens. Together, they began a boycott. Three-hundred and eighty-five days later, the Montgomery buses were desegregated, and the entire foundation of Jim Crow began to crumble.

Like so many giants of her age, Rosa Parks is no longer with us. But her lifetime of activism—and her singular moment of courage—continue to inspire us today. Rosa Parks reminds us that there is always something we can do. It is always within our power to make America better. Because Rosa Parks kept her seat, thousands of ordinary commuters walked instead of rode. Because they walked, countless other quiet heroes marched. Because they marched, our Union is more perfect. Today we remember their heroism. Most of all, we recommit ourselves to continuing their march.

Statement on the Death of Former National Security Adviser Samuel R. "Sandy" Berger
December 2, 2015

Sandy Berger was one of our Nation's foremost national security leaders. From his service in President Carter's State Department to President Clinton's National Security Advisor, Sandy devoted himself to strengthening American leadership in an uncertain world. Today, his legacy can be seen in a peaceful Balkans, our strong alliance with Japan, our deeper relationships with India and China. Around the globe, families and children are living healthier, more secure lives because, as a private citizen, Sandy was a humanitarian who helped the world respond to crises and feed the hungry. With his trademark passion, wisdom, and good humor, he is remembered fondly within the ranks of the National Security Council, where those he mentored carry on his work. I'm grateful to Sandy because, as President, I've benefited personally from his advice and counsel. Our thoughts are with Sandy's beloved family, including his wife Susan, his children Deborah, Alexander, and Sarah, and five cherished grandchildren. May they find some comfort in knowing that the America he loved is stronger because of his service.

NOTE: The statement referred to Deborah Berger Fox, Alexander Berger, and Sarah Berger Sandelius, children of former National Security Adviser Berger.

Statement on Steps Taken by the United Kingdom and Germany To Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization
December 2, 2015

I welcome the vote by the United Kingdom to join coalition partners striking ISIL targets in Syria. The special relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom is rooted in our shared values and mutual commitment to global peace, prosperity, and security. Since the beginning of the counter-ISIL campaign the United Kingdom has been one of our

most valued partners in fighting ISIL. We look forward to having British forces flying with the coalition over Syria, and will work to integrate them into our coalition air tasking orders as quickly as possible.

I also welcome yesterday's announcement from the German Cabinet that Germany will commit up to 1,200 German troops to support coalition efforts to fight ISIL, including potentially deploying reconnaissance planes, tanker aircraft, and support for the *Charles de Gaulle* aircraft carrier in the Gulf. While this still requires German parliamentary approval, this is a clear sign of Germany's continued commitment to the counter-ISIL campaign and to working with a broad range of partners to defeat this shared threat.

ISIL is a global threat that must be defeated by a global response. The United States welcomes any partner's genuine counter-ISIL efforts in Syria and Iraq, and I applaud the steps taken by the U.K. and Germany that demonstrate our unity and resolve. I look forward to working closely with the U.K., Germany, and all our coalition partners on our ongoing shared efforts to degrade and destroy ISIL.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Members of the National Security Team on the Shooting in San Bernardino, California

December 3, 2015

Yesterday a tragedy occurred in San Bernardino, and as I said in the immediate aftermath, our first order of business is to send our thoughts and prayers to the families of those who have been killed and to pray for a speedy recovery for those who were injured during this terrible attack.

I had a chance to speak with Mayor Davis of San Bernardino, and I thanked law enforcement in that city for their timely and professional response. I indicated to Mayor Davis that the entire country is thinking about that community and thanked him and his office for the way that they've been able to manage an extraordinarily difficult situation with calm and clarity and very much appreciated the coordination that's been taking place between local law enforcement and the FBI investigators.

At this stage, we do not yet know why this terrible event occurred. We do know that the two individuals who were killed were equipped with weapons and appeared to have access to additional weaponry at their homes. But we don't know why they did it. We don't know at this point the extent of their plans. We do not know their motivations.

And I just received a briefing from FBI Director Comey, as well as Attorney General Lynch, indicating the course of their investigation. At this point, this is now a FBI investigation. That's been done in cooperation and consultation with local law enforcement. It is possible that this was terrorist related, but we don't know. It's also possible that this was workplace related. And until the FBI has been able to conduct what are going to be a large number of interviews, until we understand the nature of the workplace relationship between the individual and his superiors—because he worked with the organization where this terrible shooting took place—until all the social media and electronic information has been exploited, we're just not going to be able to answer those questions.

But what I can assure the American people is, we're going to get to the bottom of this and that we are going to be vigilant, as we always are, in getting the facts before we issue any decisive judgments in terms of how this occurred.

More broadly, as I said yesterday, we see the prevalence of these kinds of mass shootings in this country, and I think so many Americans sometimes feel as if there's nothing we can do about it. We are fortunate to have an extraordinary combination of law enforcement and intelligence and military that work every single day to keep us safe. But we can't just leave it to our professionals to deal with the problem of these kinds of horrible killings. We all have a part to play.

And I do think that, as the investigation moves forward, it's going to be important for all of us—including our legislatures—to see what we can do to make sure that when individuals decide that they want to do somebody harm, we're making it a little harder for them to do it. Because right now it's just too easy. And we're going to have to, I think, search ourselves as a society to make sure that we can take basic steps that would make it harder—not impossible, but harder—for individuals to get access to weapons.

So there will be, I think, a press conference later today led by the Attorney General. Director Comey will continue to brief not only the press, but also Members of Congress about the course of the investigation. Our expectation is, is that this may take some time before we're able to sort it all through. There may be mixed motives involved in this, which makes the investigation more complicated. But rest assured that we will get to the bottom of this.

And in the meantime, once again, I want to offer our deepest condolences to those who've been affected by this terrible tragedy. And for those who've been injured, we hope that they get well quickly and that they're able to be back together with their families.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:58 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Tashfeen Malik and Syed Rizwan Farook, suspected perpetrators of the shooting and attempted bombing at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, CA, on December 2. Participating in the meeting were Vice President Joe Biden; Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch; Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James B. Comey, Jr.; Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper, Jr.; National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice; Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco; Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas; Deputy Director of the National Counterterrorism Center John J. Mulligan; and Deputy National Security Adviser Avril D. Haines. The related proclamation is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the Department of Defense Decision To Open All Military Occupational Specialties to Women

December 3, 2015

One of the qualities that makes America's Armed Forces the best in the world is that we draw on the talents and skills of our people. When we desegregated our military, it became stronger. In recent years, we ended "don't ask, don't tell" and allowed gay and lesbian Americans to serve openly, and it's made our military stronger. Over recent decades, we've opened about 90 percent of military positions to women who time and again have proven that they too are qualified, ready, and up to the task. In the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, our courageous women in uniform have served with honor on the front lines, and some have given their very lives.

Today the Defense Department is taking another historic step forward by opening up the remaining 10 percent of military positions, including combat roles, to women. As Commander in Chief, I know that this change, like others before it, will again make our military even stronger. Our Armed Forces will draw on an even wider pool of talent. Women who can meet the high standards required will have new opportunities to serve. I know that, under the leadership of Secretary Carter and Chairman Dunford, our men and women in uniform will implement this transition—as they have others—in a responsible manner that maintains military readiness and the unparalleled professionalism and strength of our Armed Forces. Together, we're going to make sure our military remains the finest fighting force in the history of the world, worthy of all our patriots who serve: men and women.

NOTE: The statement referred to Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter; and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., USMC.

Remarks on Lighting the National Christmas Tree
December 3, 2015

The President. Hello, everybody. Well, happy holidays!

Audience members. You too! Happy holidays!

The President. You know my crew: Malia, Sasha, Michelle, Grandma. Happy holidays to Reese and to everyone here tonight and everyone watching at home. Now, let's begin the process of lighting the tree. We've got a countdown going on. We're going to start at five. Here we go: five, four, three, two, one. Merry Christmas, everybody!

[*At this point, the President exited the stage as the event continued. He later returned and made additional remarks as follows*.]

The President. Merry Christmas, everybody! Thank you, Betty, for that introduction, for your extraordinary service as one of our park rangers, and for all of your—and your great-grandmother's—contributions to this country. Please give Betty a big round of applause. I want tips from Betty on how I can look that good at 94.

I also want to thank Betty's boss, Jonathan Jarvis, and for everybody from the National Park Service and the National Park Foundation for everything that they do to protect and care for America's great outdoors and for helping us "find our park" this year and every year. And thank you, Reese Witherspoon, and each of tonight's outstanding performers.

This is, of course, the most wonderful time of the year. But we would be remiss not to take a moment to remember our fellow Americans whose hearts are heavy tonight, who grieve for loved ones, especially in San Bernardino, California. Their loss is our loss too, for we're all one American family. We look out for each other in good times and in bad. And they should know that all of us care about them this holiday season. They're in our thoughts, they're in our prayers, and we send them our love.

Now, this is the 93d time Americans have gathered by the White House to light the National Christmas Tree. And as always, this tree is not alone. All across America, in living rooms, and offices, churches, and town squares, families and neighbors are gathering to decorate trees of their own and get into the holiday spirit. It's a chance to come together and to focus on what really matters: the simple gifts of family and friends; the wonder and hope in a child's eye; and of course, the spirit of giving and compassion that can help all of us find new meaning in the world around us.

That's the message of the child whose birth families like mine celebrate on Christmas, a prince born in a stable who taught us that we should love our neighbors as ourselves; and that we are our brothers' keeper and our sisters' keepers; that we should feed the hungry, visit the sick, welcome the stranger. These are the lessons of Jesus Christ. But they're also the bedrock values of all faiths, values to be cherished and embraced not only during the holidays, but to be practiced in our daily lives.

So, during this holiday season, let's come together as brothers and sisters around the humanity that we share. Let's reach out to those who can use a hand. Let's summon the spirit of togetherness that's always helped to kindle America's shining example to the world. And let's keep in our prayers those Americans who protect that ideal, especially those stationed far from home during the holidays. Our men and women in uniform and their families sacrifice so much for us. And it's because of them that we can celebrate freely, that we can worship as we please, that we can come together on a night like this strong and united and free.

So, on behalf of Michelle and Malia and Sasha and Grandma and Bo and Sunny, happy holidays to all of you. May God bless you all,

and may God bless the United States of America. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:06 p.m. on the Ellipse at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson; actor Reese Witherspoon; and Betty Soskin, park ranger, Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park in Richmond, CA.

Statement on Congressional Passage of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act
December 4, 2015

This morning we learned that our businesses have added 13.7 million jobs over 69 months, extending the longest streak on record. Last night, Democrats and Republicans came together to pass a transportation bill that will help us build on America's progress by growing our economy and creating more good jobs for our middle class. This bill is not perfect, but it is a commonsense compromise and an important first step in the right direction. I look forward to signing this bill right away so that we can put Americans to work rebuilding our crumbling roads, bridges, and transit systems, reauthorize the Export-Import Bank that helps our companies compete around the world, and give local and State governments and employers the certainty they need to invest and hire for the long term.

As we applaud the kind of bipartisan compromise that was reached last night, we should also recognize that we still have work to do. Congress should pass a bill like the GROW AMERICA Act I've proposed in the past, one that supports even more jobs and invests even more in our roads and highways than the bill passed last night so we can meet our country's infrastructure needs. Congress should pass a complete budget and avoid a Government shutdown. And Congress should approve the Trans-Pacific Partnership to open up new markets and support new jobs. If we take these kinds of commonsense steps, we can continue building an economy where every middle class family has the chance to get ahead.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 22.

The President's Weekly Address
December 5, 2015

Hi, everybody. This weekend, our hearts are with the people of San Bernardino, another American community shattered by unspeakable violence. We salute the first responders—the police, the SWAT teams, the EMTs—who responded so quickly, with such courage, and saved lives. We pray for the injured as they fight to recover from their wounds.

Most of all, we stand with 14 families whose hearts are broken. We're learning more about their loved ones—the men and women, the beautiful lives—that were lost. They were doing what so many of us do this time of year: enjoying the holidays, celebrating with each other, rejoicing in the bonds of friendship and community that bind us together as Americans. Their deaths are an absolute tragedy, not just for San Bernardino, but for our country.

We're also learning more about the killers. And we're working to get a full picture of their motives: why they committed these revolting acts. It's important to let the investigators do their job. And we need to know all the facts. And at my direction, Federal law enforcement is helping in every way that they can. We're going to get to the bottom of this.

It is entirely possible that these two attackers were radicalized to commit this act of terror. And if so, it would underscore a threat we've been focused on for years: the danger of people succumbing to violent extremist ideologies. We know that ISIL and other terrorist

groups are actively encouraging people—around the world and in our country—to commit terrible acts of violence, oftentimes as lone-wolf actors. And even as we work to prevent attacks, all of us—Government, law enforcement, communities, faith leaders—need to work together to prevent people from falling victim to these hateful ideologies.

More broadly, this tragedy reminds us of our obligation to do everything in our power, together, to keep our communities safe. We know that the killers in San Bernardino used military-style assault weapons—weapons of war—to kill as many people as they could. It's another tragic reminder that here in America, it's way too easy for dangerous people to get their hands on a gun.

For example, right now people on the no-fly list can walk into a store and buy a gun. That's insane. If you're too dangerous to board a plane, you're too dangerous, by definition, to buy a gun. And so I'm calling on Congress to close this loophole now. We may not be able to prevent every tragedy, but at a bare minimum, we shouldn't be making it so easy for potential terrorists or criminals to get their hands on a gun that they could use against Americans.

Today, in San Bernardino, investigators are searching for answers. Across our country, law enforcement professionals are tireless. They're working around the clock, as always, to protect our communities. As President, my highest priority is the security and safety of the American people.

This is work that should unite us all—as Americans—so that we're doing everything in our power to defend our country. That's how we can honor the lives we lost in San Bernardino. That's how we can send a message to all those who would try to hurt us. We are Americans. We will uphold our values: a free and open society. We are strong, and we are resilient, and we will not be terrorized.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2:50 p.m. on December 4 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on December 5. In the address, the President referred to Tashfeen Malik and Syed Rizwan Farook, suspected perpetrators of the shooting and attempted bombing at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, CA, on December 2. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 4, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 5.

Remarks at the Kennedy Center Honors Reception
December 6, 2015

Thank you so much. Please, everybody, have a seat, have a seat. Have a seat and welcome to the White House. This is a good-looking group. [*Laughter*] President Kennedy once said, "There is a connection, hard to explain logically but easy to feel, between achievement in public life and progress in the arts."

I believe he was right. Our achievements as a country and as a culture go hand in hand. The oldest of the 2015 Kennedy Center Honorees was born over 90 years ago—you won't be able to tell. [*Laughter*] But when we look back on the last century, for all the challenges we faced, what we see is a time of extraordinary progress. We won one World War and then another. And we endured one Depression and prevented another. And through it all, we created new medicines and technologies that changed the world for the better. We welcomed new generations of striving immigrants that made our country stronger. We worked together and marched together to open up new doors of opportunity for women, African Americans, Latinos, LGBT Americans, Americans with disabilities, achievements that made all of us more free.

Tonight we honor five artists who helped tell the story of the first American century through music, theater, and film, and by doing so, helped to shape it, helped to inspire it, helped to fortify our best instincts about ourselves.

[*At this point, a baby in the audience cried.*]

Yes. [*Laughter*] It includes your grandpa. [*Laughter*]

About 80 years ago, the ship carrying a young girl named Rosa Dolores Alverio—[*applause*]—yes—from Puerto Rico, came into New York City, steamed by the Statue of Liberty. "Oh my goodness," she thought, "a lady runs this country!" [*Laughter*] She wasn't yet known by the stage name of Rita Moreno, but even then, she knew she wanted to be a star. At age 9, she debuted as a dancer. At 13, she set foot in a Broadway theatre for the first time in her life, as a member of the cast. At 30, she became the first Latina to win an Academy Award for her unforgettable performance as Anita in "West Side Story."

[*The baby cried again.*]

Yes, it was good, wasn't it? [*Laughter*]

After more than seven decades on stage and screen, Rita's one of just a handful of artists to win an Emmy, a Grammy, an Oscar, and a Tony. She's got an "EGOT." But being a pioneer is never easy. For years, she was pigeonholed as what she called "the house ethnic." [*Laughter*] She says she played all her parts with the same accent, because nobody "seemed to care." [*Laughter*] And when she pushed back against Hollywood typecasting, the roles dried up. But Rita refused to sell herself short. This is a woman who won the Tony for best supporting actress, then concluded her acceptance speech by reminding everyone: "I am a leading lady. I am not a supporting actress." [*Laughter*]

And she was right. She was the leading lady of that show. And she is still a leading lady of her era, a trailblazer with the courage to break through barriers and forge new paths. Eight decades after Rita Moreno first laid eyes on the Statue of Liberty, she continues to personify its promise: that here, in America, no matter what you look like or where you come from or what your last name is, you can make it if you try.

As a teenager in Tokyo, an aspiring classical pianist named Seiji Ozawa defied his mother's orders and joined a rugby match. [*Laughter*] Now, I have to say, looking at you Seiji, I'm not sure that was a good idea. [*Laughter*] I mean, I don't know much about rugby, but—[*laughter*]. He broke two fingers, and that put an end to his piano-playing career. But fortunately for the rest of us, it opened up the door to a career as a conductor.

Now, here, Michelle and my mother-in-law would like me to point out that defying one's mother does not usually work out well. [*Laughter*] But there are exceptions, and for Seiji, it did. In 1960, when he was 25 years old, he landed at Logan Airport with only a few words of English and a sign that read, "Lennox, Mass." But his work as a conductor spoke volumes. Just a few weeks later, the New York Times pronounced him "a name to remember." He went on to become Leonard Bernstein's assistant conductor at the New York Philharmonic, and then led the Toronto and San Francisco Symphonies, all by the time he was 35. It makes you feel kind of underachieving. [*Laughter*] His conducting was somehow sensitive and intense, drawing the "lyric essence" of every note. And with his mop haircut and his turtlenecks and his love beads, he almost looked like a Beatle. [*Laughter*]

And in 1973, Seiji found his musical home with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, which he led for 29 years. When he wasn't cheering on his beloved Red Sox and Patriots, he was transfixing audiences with passionate, precise performances conducted entirely from memory, using his whole body—elbows, fingers, knees, hair—[*laughter*]—as a baton. Seiji has dedicated his life to bridging East and West with classical music. In his words: "Music is easier to understand than language. It can be understood right away. Just like the sunset, which is beautiful wherever you watch it."

As a child in Harlem, Cicely Tyson sold shopping bags on the street corner to make—to help her family make ends meet. After high school, she found work as a secretary, until one day she stood up and announced to everyone in the room, "[I am] sure that God did not put me on the face of this Earth to bang on a typewriter for the rest of my life!" [*Laughter*]

Cicely was already displaying what you could call a flair for the dramatic. [*Laughter*] And like all great actors, she never just plays a character, she becomes one. "I'm looking inside myself," she once explained. "Inside of me is where this character is coming from."

It certainly took character to get where she is today. As a Black woman, Cicely wasn't offered many roles with the pay and stature her tremendous talent should have commanded. But that only steeled her resolve. She once said: "When I became aware of the kind of ignorance that existed, I made a very conscious decision that I could not afford the luxury of just being an actress. I had some very important things to say, and I would say them through my work."

Cicely has been saying important things for nearly 60 years, from "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman" to "Sounder" to "The Trip to the Bountiful." And even now, eight shows a week, she walks onto a Broadway stage to beat James Earl Jones in hand after hand of rummy in "The Gin Game." [*Laughter*] At 90 years old, she's still delivering remarkable, heartfelt performances night after night after night, just like God intended, and she sure does look good doing it every night. Cicely Tyson.

At age 15, a young woman named Carol Klein formed a doo-wop group with her friends called the Co-Shines—Co-Sines—that's a little math. [*Laughter*] They did great with the hard-to-reach trigonometry demographic. [*Laughter*] Around the same time, Carol talked to a DJ, and asked him the best way to get in touch with record companies. He told her a secret: Look them up in a phone book. [*Laughter*] So Carol made some calls, landed a contract, and took on the stage name of Carole King.

It turned out to be a perfect choice, because today, in the world of American music, Carole is royalty. By the time she was 30, she'd teamed up with Gerry Goffin to write hits like "Up on the Roof" for the Drifters, "One Fine Day" for the Chiffons, "The Loco-Motion" for Little Eva—[*laughter*]—and of course, "You Make Me Feel (Like A Natural Woman)." I think I just became the first President ever to say that. [*Laughter*] It sounded better when Aretha said it. [*Laughter*]

And then, finally, in the 1970s, Carole found the perfect voice for her songs, which was her own. At one point, her solo album "Tapestry"—which, by the way, was one of the first albums I ever bought—was the highest selling album of any genre in history. It stayed on the charts for 6 years, full of songs you could not get out of your head: songs about home and friendship and vulnerability, songs about just being human. And that's what makes Carole so special. Whether it's winter, spring, summer, or fall—[*laughter*]—whether she's fighting with passion for our environment or campaigning for the causes that she believes in, Carole is always that honest, unvarnished voice, the friend who tells you again and again that you are beautiful, as beautiful as you feel.

George Lucas recently shared one of his regrets. He told a reporter: "I never got the experience that everyone else got to have. I never got to see 'Star Wars.'" [*Laughter*] Well, George, let me tell you, you missed out. It was really good. [*Laughter*] That movie was awesome. [*Laughter*]

As one wise Jedi Master might put it, "Changed nearly everything, George Lucas has." [*Laughter*] George was at the vanguard of the New Hollywood, blending genres and combining timeless themes with cutting-edge technology. Without him, movies would not look as good or sound as good as they do today. Spaceships might still fly around the screen with little strings attached to them. [*Laughter*] The effects were only part, though, of what makes George special. He created a mythology so compelling that in a 2001 census, the fourth largest religion in the United Kingdom was Jedi. [*Laughter*]

Think about how many children have been raised, at least in part, by George Lucas. [*Laughter*] Think about how many young people searching for their place in the universe have thought to themselves, "If a kid from a Tatooine moisture farm can go from bulls-eyeing womp rats in his T–16 to saving the galaxy, then maybe I can be something special too?" [*Laughter*] How many engineers got their start

arguing about the structural flaws in the Death Star? How many philosophers got their start arguing about whether Hans shot first? [*Laughter*] How many bookish teenagers have taken solace in the fact that the most charismatic guy on the planet is an archeologist named Indiana Jones? [*Laughter*]

George, I don't know if you've heard, but they might even make a brand new "Star Wars" movie soon. [*Laughter*] It's very low key; it's not getting a lot of promotion. [*Laughter*] But it's also pretty remarkable that nearly 40 years after the first star destroyer crawled across the screen, we are still obsessed with George's vision of a galaxy far, far away. And we'll be raising our children on his stories for a long, long time to come.

Rita Moreno. Seiji Ozawa. Cicely Tyson. Carole King. George Lucas. Each of these artists was born with something special to offer their country and the world. Each of them found a way to enrich our lives with their lives' work. For all the joy and the pleasure, all the insight and the understanding that they have brought to us over the years, we want to thank them, and we sure are proud to celebrate them as our 2015 Kennedy Center Honorees. Please give them a big round of applause.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:15 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson; actor James Earl Jones; musician Aretha Franklin; and Hank Steuver, television critic, the Washington Post.

Statement on the Observance of Hanukkah
December 6, 2015

Tonight Jews in America, Israel, and around the world come together to light the first candle of the Festival of Lights. At its heart, Hanukkah is about the struggle for justice in the face of overwhelming obstacles. It's a chance to reflect on the triumph of liberty over tyranny, the rejection of persecution, and on the miracles that can happen even in our darkest hours. It renews our commitment as Americans—as people who live by faith and conscience—to lead the way and act as unyielding advocates for the fundamental dignity of every human being.

During these 8 days, let us be inspired by the light that can overcome darkness. As we recall the Maccabees' struggle to free a people from oppression, let us rededicate ourselves to being the engine of the miracles we seek. May the lights of the menorah brighten your home and warm your heart, and from my family to yours, *Chag Sameach.*

Address to the Nation on United States Counterterrorism Strategy
December 6, 2015

Good evening. On Wednesday, 14 Americans were killed as they came together to celebrate the holidays. They were taken from family and friends who loved them deeply. They were White and Black, Latino and Asian, immigrants and American-born, moms and dads, daughters and sons. Each of them served their fellow citizens, and all of them were part of our American family.

Tonight I want to talk with you about this tragedy, the broader threat of terrorism, and how we can keep our country safe.

The FBI is still gathering the facts about what happened in San Bernardino, but here is what we know. The victims were brutally murdered and injured by one of their coworkers and his wife. So far, we have no evidence that the killers were directed by a terrorist organization overseas or that they were part of a broader conspiracy here at home. But it is clear that the two of them have—had gone down the dark path of radicalization, embracing a perverted interpretation of Islam that calls for war against America and the West.

They had stockpiled assault weapons, ammunition, and pipe bombs. So this was an act of terrorism, designed to kill innocent people.

Our Nation has been at war with terrorists since Al Qaida killed nearly 3,000 Americans on 9/11. In the process, we've hardened our defenses, from airports to financial centers to other critical infrastructure. Intelligence and law enforcement agencies have disrupted countless plots here and overseas and worked around the clock to keep us safe. Our military and counterterrorism professionals have relentlessly pursued terrorist networks overseas, disrupting safe havens in several different countries, killing Usama bin Laden, and decimating Al Qaida's leadership.

Over the last few years, however, the terrorist threat has evolved into a new phase. As we've become better at preventing complex, multifaceted attacks like 9/11, terrorists turned to less complicated acts of violence like the mass shootings that are all too common in our society. It is this type of attack that we saw at Fort Hood in 2009, in Chattanooga earlier this year, and now in San Bernardino. And as groups like ISIL grew stronger amidst the chaos of war in Iraq and then Syria, and as the Internet erases the distance between countries, we see growing efforts by terrorists to poison the minds of people like the Boston Marathon bombers and the San Bernardino killers.

For 7 years, I have confronted this evolving threat each morning in my intelligence briefing. And since the day I took this office, I've authorized U.S. forces to take out terrorists abroad precisely because I know how real the danger is. As Commander in Chief, I have no greater responsibility than the security of the American people. As a father to two young daughters who are the most precious part of my life, I know that we see ourselves with friends and coworkers at a holiday party like the one in San Bernardino. I know we see our kids in the faces of the young people killed in Paris. And I know that after so much war, many Americans are asking whether we are confronted by a cancer that has no immediate cure.

Well, here's what I want you to know: The threat from terrorism is real, but we will overcome it. We will destroy ISIL and any other organization that tries to harm us. Our success won't depend on tough talk or abandoning our values or giving into fear. That's what groups like ISIL are hoping for. Instead, we will prevail by being strong and smart, resilient and relentless, and by drawing upon every aspect of American power.

Here's how. First, our military will continue to hunt down terrorist plotters in any country where it is necessary. In Iraq and Syria, airstrikes are taking out ISIL leaders, heavy weapons, oil tankers, infrastructure. And since the attacks in Paris, our closest allies—including France, Germany, and the United Kingdom—have ramped up their contributions to our military campaign, which will help us accelerate our effort to destroy ISIL.

Second, we will continue to provide training and equipment to tens of thousands of Iraqi and Syrian forces fighting ISIL on the ground so that we take away their safe havens. In both countries, we're deploying special operations forces who can accelerate that offensive. We've stepped up this effort since the attacks in Paris, and we'll continue to invest more in approaches that are working on the ground.

Third, we're working with friends and allies to stop ISIL's operations: to disrupt plots, cut off their financing, and prevent them from recruiting more fighters. Since the attacks in Paris, we've surged intelligence sharing with our European allies. We're working with Turkey to seal its border with Syria. And we are cooperating with Muslim-majority countries—and with our Muslim communities here at home—to counter the vicious ideology that ISIL promotes online.

Fourth, with American leadership, the international community has begin—begun to establish a process—and timeline—to pursue ceasefires and a political resolution to the Syrian war. Doing so will allow the Syrian people and every country, including our allies, but also countries like Russia, to focus on the common goal of destroying ISIL, a group that threatens us all.

This is our strategy to destroy ISIL. It is designed and supported by our military commanders and counterterrorism experts, together with 65 countries that have joined an American-led coalition. And we constantly examine our strategy to determine when additional steps are needed to get the job done. That's why I've ordered the Departments of State and Homeland Security to review the visa waiver program [visa program]* under which the female terrorist in San Bernardino originally came to this country. And that's why I will urge high-tech and law enforcement leaders to make it harder for terrorists to use technology to escape from justice.

Now, here at home, we have to work together to address the challenge. There are several steps that Congress should take right away. To begin with, Congress should act to make sure no one on a no-fly list is able to buy a gun. What could possibly be the argument for allowing a terrorist suspect to buy a semiautomatic weapon? This is a matter of national security.

We also need to make it harder for people to buy powerful assault weapons like the ones that were used in San Bernardino. I know there are some who reject any gun safety measures. But the fact is that our intelligence and law enforcement agencies—no matter how effective they are—cannot identify every would-be mass shooter, whether that individual is motivated by ISIL or some other hateful ideology. What we can do—and must do—is make it harder for them to kill.

Next, we should put in place stronger screening for those who come to America without a visa so that we can take a hard look at whether they've traveled to war zones. And we're working with members of both parties in Congress to do exactly that.

Finally, if Congress believes, as I do, that we are at war with ISIL, it should go ahead and vote to authorize the continued use of military force against these terrorists. For over a year, I have ordered our military to take thousands of airstrikes against ISIL targets. I think it's time for Congress to vote to demonstrate that the American people are united and committed to this fight.

My fellow Americans, these are the steps that we can take together to defeat the terrorist threat. Let me now say a word about what we should not do. We should not be drawn once more into a long and costly ground war in Iraq or Syria. That's what groups like ISIL want. They know they can't defeat us on the battlefield. ISIL fighters were part of the insurgency that we faced in Iraq. But they also know that if we occupy foreign lands, they can maintain insurgencies for years, killing thousands of our troops, draining our resources, and using our presence to draw new recruits.

The strategy that we are using now—airstrikes, special forces, and working with local forces who are fighting to regain control of their own country—that is how we'll achieve a more sustainable victory. And it won't require us sending a new generation of Americans overseas to fight and die for another decade on foreign soil.

Here's what else we cannot do. We cannot turn against one another by letting this fight be defined as a war between America and Islam. That too is what groups like ISIL want. ISIL does not speak for Islam. They are thugs and killers, part of a cult of death, and they account for a tiny fraction of a—more than a billion Muslims around the world, including millions of patriotic Muslim Americans who reject their hateful ideology. Moreover, the vast majority of terrorist victims around the world are Muslim. If we're to succeed in defeating terrorism, we must enlist Muslim communities as some of our strongest allies, rather than push them away through suspicion and hate.

That does not mean denying the fact that an extremist ideology has spread within some Muslim communities. This is a real problem that Muslims must confront, without excuse. Muslim leaders here and around the globe have to continue working with us: to decisively and unequivocally reject the hateful ideology that groups like ISIL and Al Qaida promote; to

* White House correction.

speak out against not just acts of violence, but also those interpretations of Islam that are incompatible with the values of religious tolerance, mutual respect, and human dignity.

But just as it is the responsibility of Muslims around the world to root out misguided ideas that lead to radicalization, it is the responsibility of all Americans, of every faith, to reject discrimination. It is our responsibility to reject religious tests on who we admit into this country. It's our responsibility to reject proposals that Muslim Americans should somehow be treated differently. Because when we travel down that road, we lose. That kind of divisiveness, that betrayal of our values, plays into the hands of groups like ISIL. Muslim Americans are our friends and our neighbors, our coworkers, our sports heroes. And yes, they are our men and women in uniform who are willing to die in defense of our country. We have to remember that.

My fellow Americans, I am confident we will succeed in this mission because we are on the right side of history. We were founded upon a belief in human dignity, that no matter who you are or where you come from or what you look like or what religion you practice, you are equal in the eyes of God and equal in the eyes of the law.

Even in this political season, even as we properly debate what steps I and future Presidents must take to keep our country safe, let's make sure we never forget what makes us exceptional. Let's not forget that freedom is more powerful than fear; that we have always met challenges—whether war or depression, natural disasters or terrorist attacks—by coming together around our common ideals as one Nation and one people. So long as we stay true to that tradition, I have no doubt America will prevail.

Thank you. God bless you, and may God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:01 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik, suspected perpetrators of the terrorist attack at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, CA, on December 2; and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, who was convicted for his role in the Boston Marathon bombing of April 15, 2013. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the United States-Jordan Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters
December 8, 2015

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, signed at Washington on October 1, 2013. I also transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty.

The Treaty is one of a series of modern mutual legal assistance treaties negotiated by the United States to more effectively counter criminal activities. The Treaty should enhance our ability to investigate and prosecute a wide variety of crimes.

The Treaty provides for a broad range of cooperation in criminal matters. Under the Treaty, the Parties agree to assist each other by, among other things: producing evidence (such as testimony, documents, or items) obtained voluntarily or, where necessary, by compulsion; arranging for persons, including persons in custody, to travel to another country to provide evidence; serving documents; executing searches and seizures; locating and identifying persons or items; and freezing and forfeiting assets or property that may be the proceeds or instrumentalities of crime.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty, and give its advice and consent to ratification.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
December 8, 2015.

Remarks Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the 13th Amendment
December 9, 2015

"In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free." That's what President Lincoln once wrote. "Honorable alike in what we give, and what we preserve. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth."

Mr. Speaker, leaders and Members of both parties, distinguished guests: We gather here to commemorate a century and a half of freedom, not simply for former slaves, but for all of us.

Today, the issue of chattel slavery seems so simple, so obvious. It is wrong in every sense. Stealing men, women, and children from their homelands. Tearing husbands from wife, parent from child; stripped and sold to the highest bidder; shackled in chains and bloodied with the whip. It's antithetical not only to our conception of human rights and dignity, but to our conception of ourselves: a people founded on the premise that all are created equal.

And to many at the time, that judgment was clear as well. Preachers, Black and White, railed against this moral outrage from the pulpit. Former slaves rattled the conscience of Americans in books, in pamphlets, and speeches. Men and women organized antislavery conventions and fundraising drives. Farmers and shopkeepers opened their barns, their homes, their cellars as waystations on an Underground Railroad, where African Americans often risked their own freedom to ensure the freedom of others. And enslaved Americans, with no rights of their own, they ran North and kept the flame of freedom burning, passing it from one generation to the next, with their faith and their dignity and their song.

The reformers' passion only drove the protectors of the status quo to dig in harder. And for decades, America wrestled with the issue of slavery in a way that we have with no other, before or since. It shaped our politics, and it nearly tore us asunder. Tensions ran so high, so personal, that at one point, a lawmaker was beaten unconscious on the Senate floor. Eventually, war broke out, brother against brother, North against South.

At its heart, the question of slavery was never simply about civil rights, it was about the meaning of America, the kind of country we wanted to be, whether this Nation might fulfill the call of its birth: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights," that among those are life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

President Lincoln understood that if we were ever to fully realize that founding promise, it meant not just signing an Emancipation Proclamation, not just winning a war, it meant making the most powerful collective statement we can in our democracy: etching our values into our Constitution. He called it "a King's cure for all the evils."

A hundred and fifty years proved the cure to be necessary, but not sufficient. Progress proved halting, too often deferred. Newly freed slaves may have been liberated by the letter of the law, but their daily lives told another tale. They couldn't vote. They couldn't fill most occupations. They couldn't protect themselves or their families from indignity or from violence. And so abolitionists and freed men and women and radical Republicans kept cajoling and kept rabble-rousing, and within a few years of the war's end at Appomattox, we passed two more amendments guaranteeing voting rights, birthright citizenship, equal protection under the law.

And still, it wasn't enough. For another century, we saw segregation and Jim Crow make a mockery of these amendments. And we saw

justice turn a blind eye to mobs with nooses slung over trees. We saw bullets and bombs terrorize generations.

And yet, through all this, the call to freedom survived. "We hold these truths to be self-evident." And eventually, a new generation rose up to march and to organize and to stand up and to sit in with the moral force of nonviolence and the sweet sound of those same freedom songs that slaves had sung so long ago, crying out not for special treatment, but for equal rights; calling out for basic justice promised to them almost a century before.

Like their abolitionist predecessors, they were plain, humble, ordinary people, armed with little but faith: faith in the Almighty, faith in each other, and faith in America. Hope, in the face so often of all evidence to the contrary, that something better lay around the bend.

Because of them—maids and porters and students and farmers and priests and housewives—because of them, a civil rights law was passed and a voting rights law was signed. And doors of opportunity swung open, not just for the Black porter, but also for the White chambermaid and the immigrant dishwasher, so that their daughters and their sons might finally imagine a life for themselves beyond washing somebody else's laundry or shining somebody else's shoes. Freedom for you and for me. Freedom for all of us.

And that's what we celebrate today: the long arc of progress. Progress that is never assured, never guaranteed, but always possible, always there to be earned, no matter how stuck we might seem sometimes. No matter how divided or despairing we may appear. No matter what ugliness may bubble up. Progress, so long as we're willing to push for it, so long as we're willing to reach for each other.

We would do a disservice to those warriors of justice—Tubman and Douglass and Lincoln and King—were we to deny that the scars of our Nation's original sin are still with us today. We condemn ourselves to shackles once more if we fail to answer those who wonder if they're truly equals in their communities or in their justice systems or in a job interview. We betray the efforts of the past if we fail to push back against bigotry in all its forms.

But we betray our most noble past as well if we were to deny the possibility of movement, the possibility of progress; if we were to let cynicism consume us and fear overwhelm us. If we lost hope. For however slow, however incomplete, however harshly, loudly, rudely challenged at each point along our journey, in America, we can create the change that we seek. All it requires is that our generation be willing to do what those who came before us have done: to rise above the cynicism and rise above the fear, to hold fast to our values, to see ourselves in each other, to cherish dignity and opportunity not just for our own children, but for somebody else's child. To remember that our freedom is bound up with the freedom of others, regardless of what they look like or where they come from or what their last name is or what faith they practice. To be honorable alike in what we give and what we preserve. To "nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth." To nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth. That is our choice. Today we affirm hope.

Thank you. God bless you. May God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:02 p.m. in Emancipation Hall at the U.S. Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Speaker of the House of Representatives Paul D. Ryan.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Reuven Rivlin of Israel
December 9, 2015

President Obama. Well, it is a wonderful pleasure to greet and welcome President Rivlin on his first trip to the Oval Office as the President of Israel. This gives us an opportunity to reaffirm the unbreakable bonds between our two countries and our two peoples. And we are especially pleased that President Rivlin and Mrs. Rivlin is going to—are going to be able to

join us a little bit later this afternoon at the first of our two Hanukkah parties here at the White House. So we feel very blessed by that.

As I've reiterated many times before and as I indicated when Prime Minister Netanyahu was here, we consider our commitment to Israel's security to be one of the most important principles of American foreign policy. It's one that is shared by Democrats and Republicans alike. Under my administration, I'm very proud of the unprecedented military and intelligence cooperation that we have and the consistent support that we've provided to Israel's defenses. And this will give us a chance to discuss the future of that relationship, and I'll discuss with President Rivlin the work that we're doing to develop another memorandum of understanding that can lay the foundation for——

President Rivlin. Yes.

President Obama. ——additional long-term assistance for Israel's defenses.

We'll also have a chance to talk about what is a very volatile neighborhood and the challenges that we all face from terrorism, the challenges that we all face from instability in the Middle East. And I'll be very interested in hearing President Rivlin's views on those issues.

And we'll have an opportunity to discuss the challenges that Israel faces internally and the ways in which we can be helpful in tamping down tensions between Israelis and Palestinians. I've been very clear in condemning the violence that is recurring inside of Israel, the need for leaders like President Abbas to unequivocally condemn the violence that's been taking place, the need to end incitement, but also the need for Israelis and Palestinians to find mechanisms in which to dialogue and arrive at peace. And although, obviously, this is a time at which the prospects of serious peace may seem distant, it's important that we continue to try. And I know that President Rivlin has made it one of his hallmarks to improve dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians and Arab Israeli citizens and the larger majority. And so we very much appreciate the work that he has done there.

God bless you, Mr. President. God bless the state of America.

So, Mr. President, I look forward to our conversation. I want to welcome you here today. And you are, as I said before the press came in, among friends. We're glad that you're able to celebrate Hanukkah with us here today.

President Rivlin. Thank you so very much.

President Obama. Thank you.

President Rivlin. Thank you.

President Obama. Thank you.

President Rivlin. Well, the obvious should be said from time to time and even being written: Israel has no greatest friend than the United States of America. That has to be very clear, and I say that loud and clear.

Well, Mr. President, we are facing the future. And we would like, at the same time, to really thank you from the bottom of our heart, the people of Israel, about what you have done in the last 6 years for the finance, for the diplomatic, and for the military help that you are giving us. You are making us able to stand against threats of today and of tomorrow.

I would like also to say that we are very grateful to you about the—your declaration about the need to fight extremism, whatever and wherever it is. And we are really going hand in hand with the—those ideas and these ideas. We have no war—we have no war with Islam. We have war against those who are using ideas in order to create extremism and threats towards the whole innocent people in the world.

Well, in—later on, we are going to light the Hanukkah candles, and the menorah, the Israeli menorah, the Jewish menorah has eight candles, four on each side. And in the middle, you have a—what we call the Shamash. The Shamash is not civil servant, it is the leader. The leader who, with him, we are lighting all the candles. And we know, Mr. President, that you have lit the candle for the last 7 years to show the way and the right way to your people and to the entire world. And we are very sure that the eighth candle that you will light in the next year will be the same: to show the whole world how to go in the light and to be able to fight everything that we should not accept and we should not get along with.

President Obama. Thank you so much. Thank you very much.

President Rivlin. It's a pleasure.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:27 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Nechama Shulman Rivlin, wife of President Rivlin; and President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority.

Remarks With President Reuven Rivlin of Israel at a Hanukkah Reception
December 9, 2015

President Obama. Hello, everybody! Well, welcome to the White House, and Happy Hanukkah! Before we begin, let's give a big round of applause to our musical guests, the Maccabeats. This is not the first time they have performed here, but they are more popular than ever. Their latest viral video is called "Latke Recipe." [*Laughter*] So, if the food is better than usual this year, you will know why. [*Laughter*]

Ordinarily, I like to tell people at the afternoon Hanukkah party that this is the special one. [*Laughter*] And then, I tell the people in the evening they're the special ones. [*Laughter*] But this afternoon really is special, because we are joined by Israel's President, President Rivlin, and Mrs. Rivlin.

President Rivlin. Thank you. Thank you.

President Obama. So earlier today we had an excellent meeting where we reaffirmed the unbreakable bond between the United States and Israel. President Rivlin is a strong voice for equal treatment of all citizens of Israel and greater understanding between Israelis and Palestinians. And I was deeply moved by his expressions and—of commitment to equality and justice.

We're also honored that after Rabbi Susan Talve from St. Louis's Central Reform Congregation leads us in the blessing, President Rivlin and Mrs. Rivlin will join us in lighting the Hanukkah candles.

We do have some other special guests who are here today. I want to welcome all the Members of Congress who are here. Also, last Hanukkah, some of you may remember we celebrated Alan Gross's return home from Cuba. We are proud to have Alan here today at the White House. So that's worthy of celebration.

All of us come together, along with Jews around the world, to celebrate a band of Maccabees who inspire us even today. They were outnumbered, they were outarmed, and yet they proved that freedom can prevail over tyranny, hope can triumph over despair, light can prevail over darkness. That sounds like a description of the new "Star Wars" movie. [*Laughter*] But this one happened a little earlier.

The light from 1 day's worth of oil has lasted not just for 8 days, but for more than 2,000 years. The Maccabees' sense of faith and courage and righteousness continue to animate the Jewish community even now. It's no accident that when we're called out to speak on behalf of refugees or against religious persecution, American Jews remember what it was like to be a stranger and are leading the way. And even as we draw from the best of our traditions, we're never afraid to build on what came before and to forge a better future for our children and our grandchildren.

And that's certainly the story of the menorah that we light this afternoon. Ze'ev Raban was born in Poland, studied in Munich, Paris, and Brussels, before emigrating to what would become the State of Israel. As a member of the Bezalel School, he helped create a new Hebrew style of art. And his work is uniquely Jewish, but its beauty is universal, just like so many of the values that we celebrate on this holiday.

So, as we light one of Ze'ev Raban's beautiful menorahs, may we, too, be inspired to create something beautiful and lasting in this world. May the warmth of family and friends around the world bring us comfort and bring us joy. And may miracles past and present continue to inspire us as we build a better world together.

And with that, I would like to invite President Rivlin to say a few words, and then we will get the blessing from our Rabbi.

President Rivlin. Thank you. Thank you so very much. President Obama, Barack, and First Lady Michelle, thank you. Thank you for honoring and hosting my wife Nechama and me and all the guests from Israel to celebrate Hanukkah with you.

This is my 76th Hanukkah. [*Laughter*] I remember nearly all of them. [*Laughter*] I love all of them. But this one is for sure a little different. It is not easy to be away from your family—from our children and our grandchildren—to be away from Israel or from the wonderful city of Jerusalem, especially at Hanukkah. But they told me that the latkes and the doughnuts would be worth coming all the way, so here we are—[*laughter*]——

President Obama. Yes. That's true.

President Rivlin. ——standing here next to the menorah, which we call a *Hanukiah* in Hebrew.

We remember the brave Maccabees. We remember they did not fight against, they fought for: for liberty, for freedom of religion, for their traditions, for our traditions, for their ability to celebrate their own identity. Hanukkah is the holiday of spiritual activism. It is a holiday which represents the spirit of human being, created equally in the image of God.

Today, we see around the world terrible crimes and the danger to humanity cause a lack of respect, freedom of faith, freedom of religion. Each night of Hanukkah, we add; we add a new light to the menorah. Rabbi Abraham Heschel, one of the best friends of Martin Luther King, wrote in his book "Insecurity of Freedom" that people usually follow the path of regression. They begin high and fall down. But instead, we should be like the Hanukkah candles and follow the path of progression. He said that the people will have the strength to ascend if the leader himself continues to rise.

Today, we are all looking for strong and clear moral leadership of the kind of—you represent, President Obama. Leadership committed to the safety of its people, to the opportunity and the dignity of every human being. I would like to light this candle, this little flame, with a prayer and hope that one day, religious, cultural, and moral liberty will be enjoyed without question by each and every person in the world.

Hanukkah Sameach. Happy Hanukkah!

And to the Christian people all over the world, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year!

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:08 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Alan P. Gross, a former U.S. Agency for International Development contractor who was detained by Cuban authorities for 5 years and released to U.S. custody on December 17, 2014.

Remarks at a Hanukkah Reception
December 9, 2015

The President. All righty. Good evening, everybody!

Audience members. Good evening.

The President. Welcome to the White House. Happy Hanukkah! I want, first of all, everybody to acknowledge and give it up for the Chai Notes from Cornell University. Give them a big round of applause.

A couple of other special guests who are here—we have the honor of the participation of three of our Supreme Court Justices: Justices Kagan, Justices Breyer, and Justice Ginsburg—there she is, also known as the Notorious RBG. [*Laughter*] We've got some Members of Congress who are here. None of them are notorious. [*Laughter*]

This is a wonderful event for two reasons. Number one, latkes—[*laughter*]—which are excellent here at the White House. [*Laughter*] Number two, we get to tell a really inspiring story. Tonight we recall a small band of Maccabees who, outmanned and outarmed, holding fast to their faith, won their freedom. When they found their temple ransacked, they built a new altar. When their golden menorah was stolen, they made a new one using whatever materials that they had. When there wasn't enough fuel to keep the flame in their temple

alive, they lit whatever oil they had. In other words, they did not take no for an answer. [*Laughter*] And their faith was rewarded when a miracle occurred, and the oil that was supposed to last for just 1 night lasted for 8.

So Hanukkah is a chance for us to remember not only ancient miracles, but modern-day miracles as well. In just a few minutes, Manny Lindenbaum will light the candles here at the White House along with his granddaughter Lauren. In August of 1939, Manny and his brother escaped from Poland to England as refugees—the famous *Kindertransport*—just days before the Nazis invaded. In 1946, the Jewish organization HIAS reunited Manny with an aunt and an uncle in New Jersey, and he's been an American ever since.

Manny never forgot that the miracle of his life was only made possible because righteous people reached out their hand to a stranger. He's determined to be one of those people for a new generation of refugees. So, last year, at age 81—you wouldn't know it looking at him—[*laughter*]—Manny bicycled 200 miles through Europe with his kids and his grandkids, retracing his journey to freedom in reverse. Now, I think, in my view, any 81-year-old on a bike tour is pretty cool. [*Laughter*]

The First Lady. That's right.

The President. But Manny didn't ride just for himself, he rode to honor the family members he had lost in the Holocaust, to raise money for HIAS's work with refugee children from Darfur.

Imagine the world we could build together if all of us took our cues from Manny and truly lived up to the ideal that we are all God's children, that none of us should turn our backs on a stranger. [*Applause*] Right? And that's our challenge during this Hanukkah season. Whether it's standing up for the dignity of refugees, standing up against anti-Semitism—or any kind of bigotry or discrimination leveled at any religion—or standing with our ally, the State of Israel, we can raise our voices, each of us, for the security and dignity of every human being. Because we are at our best when we believe that our light has the power to shine through darkness; that the story of the Jewish people, the story of America—it's the story of the menorah Manny and Lauren will light this evening.

As a young man, the artist Erwin Thieberger survived Auschwitz. And even when he was a prisoner, he used whatever materials he could find—cement, nails, lead—to make menorahs like this one. And during one of humanity's darkest hours, he never lost faith. Tonight the light of one of Erwin's menorahs will burn brightly at the White House.

This Hanukkah, may the examples of miracles old and new inspire us all. May we reaffirm the power of faith over fear. And may our common humanity shine throughout the world.

With that, I would like to invite Rabbi Sid Schwarz from Adat Shalom in Bethesda to lead us in the blessing and help us to light the candles.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:37 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Remarks on Signing the Every Student Succeeds Act
December 10, 2015

Well, thank you so much, everybody. Please have a seat, have a seat. Welcome to the White House. First of all, I want to thank Antonio for being such an outstanding role model. Back in 2011, when he was much shorter—[*laughter*]—I visited Kenmore Middle School and saw firsthand their great work helping students like Antonio achieve their potential. And that's why we're here today.

This is an early Christmas present. After more than 10 years, Members of Congress from both parties have come together to revise our national education law. A Christmas miracle: a bipartisan bill signing right here. [*Laughter*] So I was telling Lamar, we should do this more often. [*Laughter*] I love it when we're signing bipartisan bills. Today I'm proud to sign a law that's going to make sure that every

student is prepared to succeed in the 21st century.

The goals of No Child Left Behind, the predecessor of this law, were the right ones: high standards, accountability, closing the achievement gap, making sure that every child was learning, not just some. But in practice, it often fell short. It didn't always consider the specific needs of each community. It led to too much testing during classroom time. It often forced schools and school districts into cookie-cutter reforms that didn't always produce the kinds of results that we wanted to see. And that's okay. Sometimes, reform efforts require you try something, it doesn't work, you learn some lessons, and you make modifications.

So my administration, when we came into office, tried some different things. We tried to lead a Race to the Top. That's why we acted to give States that were willing to embrace reforms that they helped to formulate more flexibility in how to improve student achievement. They were receiving waivers from some of the requirements of No Child Left Behind. But the truth is, that could only do so much. And that's why, for years, I have called on Congress to come together and get a bipartisan effort to fix No Child Left Behind.

It took a lot of time; it required a lot of work. But thanks to the tireless efforts of many of the people on this stage and some people who are in attendance here today, we finally reached that deal. There are some people that I especially want to thank. First of all, Senators Lamar Alexander and Patty Murray on the Senate side and Representatives John Kline and Bobby Scott on the House side, as well as their dedicated staffs. This would not have happened without them.

And I just want to point out that it's not as if there weren't some significant ideological differences on some of these issues. [*Laughter*] No, there were, but I think that this is really a good example of how bipartisanship can work. People did not agree on everything at the outset, but they were willing to listen to each other in a civil, constructive way and to work through these issues, compromise where necessary, while still keeping their eye on the ball. And I think it's really a testament of the four leaders of the respective committees that they set that kind of tone. And that's something that we don't always see here in Washington. There wasn't a lot of grandstanding, not a lot of posturing, just a lot of really good, hard work. So I just want to, again, thank them for the outstanding work that they did.

I also want to thank my outgoing Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan. Arne has dedicated his life to the cause of education. And sometimes, in the nicest possible way, he has gotten on people's nerves because he has pushed them and prodded them and tried to make sure that we set high expectations and that we are holding ourselves accountable for children's performance—or the school's performance and how they were delivering for our kids. And had he not been, I believe, as tenacious as he was, I think that we would not have as good of a product as we do here today. And so I could not be prouder of Arne Duncan, and I want everyone to give him a big round of applause.

We are going to miss Arne Duncan a lot. Fortunately, in addition to some great staff that he assembled that is going to be staying on, we also have a great replacement for Arne in Dr. John King, who is going to be doing outstanding work helping to implement this.

So, in addition, obviously, we've had some outstanding advocates. We've got our teachers unions, we've got our civil rights organizations, we've got philanthropies, all of who—community groups—who have been active and involved, and the Governors organizations and school districts have also been involved, the superintendents. So we want to thank all them for their contributions. All the stakeholders have really buckled down to make this day possible.

And the law comes at an important moment. Over the past 7 years, the good news is that our students have made real strides. You've seen States raise academic expectations for all students. That means that we're in a better position to out-teach and outcompete other nations at a time when knowledge is really the single biggest determinant of economic performance.

High school graduation rates have reached an alltime high; dropout rates have hit historic lows. The number of high schools so bad they're called dropout factories has been cut almost in half. We're training tens of thousands of outstanding math and science teachers. More students are graduating from college than ever before, and more than a million additional Black and Hispanic students are now going to college.

So there is some real good work that's been done, a foundation to build from. But we're here because we all know that there's a lot more work to be done. As wonderful as Antonio's school is, as wonderful as a learning experience is as a lot of our young people are receiving, we know that there are other schools that just aren't hitting the mark yet. And in today's economy, a high-quality education is a prerequisite for success.

We're going to have to have our young people master not just the basics, but also become critical thinkers and creative problem solvers. And our competitive advantage depends on whether our kids are prepared to seize the opportunities for tomorrow. So we need to build on the momentum that has already been established. We've got to learn what works and do more of that, and we've got to get rid of the stuff that doesn't work. And that's exactly what the Every Student Succeeds Act does.

First, this law focuses on a national goal of ensuring that all of our students graduate prepared for college and future careers. It builds on the reforms that have helped us make so much progress already, holding everybody to high standards for teaching and learning, empowering States and school districts to develop their own strategies for improvement, dedicating resources to our most vulnerable children. And this law requires States to invest in helping students and schools improve and focusing on the lowest performing schools and closing those big achievement gaps.

Second, this bill makes long-overdue fixes to the last education law, replacing the one-size-fits-all approach to reform with a commitment to provide every student with a well-rounded education. It creates real partnerships between the States, which will have new flexibility to tailor their improvement plans, and the Federal Government, which will have the oversight to make sure that the plans are sound.

It helps States and districts reduce unnecessary standardized tests, something we talked about a couple of months ago, because what we want to do is to get rid of unnecessary standardized tests so that more teachers can spend time engaging in student learning, while at the same time making sure that parents and teachers have clear information on their children's academic performance.

Number three, we know that the early years can make a huge difference in a child's life, so this law lays the foundation to expand access to high-quality preschools, and it creates incentives for innovative approaches to learning and for supporting great teachers.

And finally, this bill upholds the core value that animated the original Elementary and Secondary Education Act signed by President Lyndon Johnson, the value that says education, the key to economic opportunity, is a civil right. With this bill, we reaffirm that fundamentally American ideal that every child, regardless of race, income, background, the ZIP Code where they live, deserves the chance to make out of their lives what they will.

So this is a big step in the right direction, a true bipartisan effort, a reminder of what can be done when people enter into these issues in a spirit of listening and compromise. But of course, now the hard work begins. Laws are only as good as the implementation. And that means that we're going to have to be engaging with the schools and communities all across the country, educators, school leaders, families, students, elected officials, community leaders, philanthropies—all to make the promise of this law reality.

And by the way, it's going to take students like Antonio. He's doing his part. He's taking advanced classes to get a head start on high school credits. He plays the violin. He plays sports. He volunteers. He owns one share of stock in Tesla. [*Laughter*] So he's clearly going places. I'd invest in him if I could. But one of the reasons Antonio is thriving is, he's got great

teachers and a great principal at Kenmore. They saw that spark in him, and, like all great educators, they're helping him to harness his energy and his curiosity and his talents.

And that's what we want every single child in America to have. Just—we just want to give them a chance. And so many of them are full of that same talent and drive, but we let them slip through the cracks, or we're not creative enough in thinking about how they can be engaged, or they just don't have the resources that they need in the classroom, or they fell behind early because they didn't get the support that they needed given the tough circumstances they were born into.

And we want to make sure that through this piece of legislation, with our hard work, with our focus, with our discipline, with our passion, with our commitment, that every kid is getting the same opportunities that Antonio is getting. I want this not just because it's good for the students themselves, not just because it's good for the communities involved, not only because it's good for our economy, but because it really goes to the essence of what we are about as Americans.

There was a time, I think, when upward mobility was the hallmark of America. We've slipped on that front compared to other countries. And some of it is because where we used to be so far ahead of other countries in investing in education for every child, now on some indicators, we've been lagging behind. Hopefully, this is going to get us back out front.

There's nothing more essential to living up to the ideals of this Nation than making sure every child is able to achieve their God-given potential. And I could not be prouder of the people on this stage and those of you in the audience who helped us take just one step closer to that reality.

So, with that, let me sign this bill. All right?

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Antonio Martin, student, Kenmore Middle School in Arlington, VA, who introduced the President; and John Word, principal, Kenmore Middle School. S. 1177, approved December 10, was assigned Public Law No. 114–95.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Global Deployment of United States Combat-Equipped Armed Forces
December 11, 2015

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am providing this supplemental consolidated report, prepared by my Administration and consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148), as part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed about deployments of U.S. Armed Forces equipped for combat.

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN SUPPORT OF U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM OBJECTIVES

In furtherance of U.S. counterterrorism efforts, the United States continues to work with partners around the globe, with a particular focus on the U.S. Central Command's and U.S. Africa Command's areas of responsibility. In this context, the United States has deployed U.S. combat-equipped forces to enhance the counterterrorism capabilities and support the counterterrorism operations of our friends and allies. Specific information about counterterrorism deployments to select countries is provided below, and a classified annex to this report provides further information.

Military Operations Against al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, and Associated Forces and in Support of Related U.S. Counterterrorism Objectives

Since October 7, 2001, U.S. Armed Forces, including special operations forces, have conducted counterterrorism combat operations in Afghanistan against al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, and associated forces. In support of these and other

overseas operations, the United States has deployed combat-equipped forces to a number of locations in the U.S. Central, Pacific, European, Southern, and Africa Command areas of operation. Such operations and deployments have been reported previously, consistent with Public Law 107–40 and the War Powers Resolution, and operations and deployments remain ongoing. These operations, which the United States has carried out with the assistance of numerous international partners, have been successful in seriously degrading al-Qa'ida's capabilities and brought an end to the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan. If necessary, in response to terrorist threats, I will direct additional measures to protect U.S. citizens and interests. It is not possible to know at this time the precise scope or the duration of the deployments of U.S. Armed Forces necessary to counter terrorist threats to the United States.

Afghanistan. As I previously announced, U.S. Armed Forces have transitioned the lead for security to Afghan security forces while striking significant blows against al-Qa'ida's leadership and preventing Afghanistan from being used to launch attacks against our homeland. A limited number of U.S. forces remain in Afghanistan for the purposes of training, advising, and assisting Afghan forces, conducting and supporting counterterrorism operations against the remnants of al-Qa'ida, and taking appropriate measures against those who directly threaten U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan or provide direct support to al-Qa'ida. The United States currently remains in an armed conflict against al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, and associated forces, and active hostilities against those groups remain ongoing.

The mission to help train, advise, and assist the Afghan National Security Forces and Afghan ministries and institutions continues through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization-led Resolute Support Mission. The United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2189, dated December 12, 2014, which welcomed the Resolute Support Mission and underscored the importance of continued international support for the stability of Afghanistan.

Today, there are approximately 10,500 U.S. forces in Afghanistan, consistent with the Force Management Level of 9,800. (The actual number of U.S. military personnel in Afghanistan may exceed this Force Management Level due to, for example, overlap during rotations of units, and the continued presence of forces with the single mission of supporting the retrograde of U.S. equipment, both of which are excluded from counting against the Force Management Level.)

Iraq and Syria. As part of a comprehensive strategy to degrade and ultimately defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), U.S. Armed Forces are conducting a systematic campaign of airstrikes and other necessary actions against ISIL forces in Iraq and Syria. United States Armed Forces are also conducting airstrikes in Syria against operatives of al-Qa'ida, including members of the al-Qa'ida element known as the Khorasan Group, who are involved in al-Qa'ida's plotting against the West. In Iraq, U.S. forces are advising and coordinating with Iraqi forces and providing training, equipment, communications support, intelligence support, and other support to select elements of the Iraqi security forces, including Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga forces. On October 22, 2015, U.S. Armed Forces supported an Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga operation to rescue hostages at an ISIL detention facility near Hawijah, Iraq, and U.S. Armed Forces remain postured to support or conduct further similar operations in Iraq and Syria. Additionally, small teams of U.S. special operations forces have deployed to northern Syria to help coordinate U.S. operations with indigenous ground forces conducting operations against ISIL. The Force Management Level for U.S. Armed Forces in Iraq currently is 3,550; up to approximately 50 U.S. Armed Forces personnel may be deployed in Syria as circumstances warrant. These actions are being undertaken in coordination with and at the request of the Government of Iraq and in conjunction with coalition partners.

Turkey. In July 2015, the Government of Turkey agreed to the U.S. request to deploy U.S. combat aircraft to Turkey to conduct air

operations in support of counter-ISIL operations. Strike aircraft and about 350 U.S. military personnel deployed to Turkey on August 10, 2015. Beginning on November 6, 2015, additional fighter and strike aircraft, with approximately 375 U.S. military personnel, deployed to Turkey in support of counter-ISIL operations, and to support Turkish air sovereignty operations at the Turkish government's request.

Somalia. In Somalia, U.S. forces have worked to counter the terrorist threat posed by al-Qa'ida and associated elements of al-Shabaab, and to provide advice and assistance to regional counterterrorism forces, including Somali and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) forces. On December 2, 2015, U.S. forces conducted an airstrike against Abdirahman Sandhere, an al-Shabaab senior leader who is part of al-Qa'ida. United States forces also conducted a series of strikes in support of Somali forces, AMISOM forces, and U.S. forces in Somalia between June 28, 2015, and July 29, 2015, and on November 21, 2015.

Yemen. The U.S. military has also been working closely with the Government of Yemen to operationally dismantle and ultimately eliminate the terrorist threat posed by al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), the most active and dangerous affiliate of al-Qa'ida today. Our joint efforts have resulted in direct action against a limited number of AQAP operatives and senior leaders in that country who posed a terrorist threat to the United States and our interests.

Djibouti. United States forces continue to partner with Government of Djibouti authorities, which have permitted use of Djiboutian territory for basing of U.S. forces. United States forces remain deployed to Djibouti, including for purposes of posturing for counterterrorism operations in the Horn of Africa and Arabian Peninsula.

Libya. On June 13, 2015, U.S. forces conducted an airstrike targeting Mokhtar Belmokhtar, an Algerian national who was the mastermind of the 2013 attacks in In-Amenas, Algeria. That 2013 attack resulted in the death of 38 civilians, including three Americans. On November 13, 2015, U.S. forces conducted an airstrike in Libya against Wissam Najm Abd Zayd al Zubaydi, also known as Abu Nabil, an Iraqi national who was a longtime al-Qa'ida operative and who had assumed the role of a senior ISIL leader in Libya.

Cuba. Combat-equipped forces, deployed since January 2002 to the Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, continue to conduct humane and secure detention operations for detainees held at Guantanamo Bay under the authority provided by the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (Public Law 107–40), as informed by the law of war. There were 107 such detainees as of the date of this report.

Military Operations in Niger in Support of U.S. Counterterrorism Objectives

United States military personnel in Niger continue to provide support for intelligence collection and to facilitate intelligence sharing with French forces conducting operations in the Sahel and with other partners in the region. The total number of U.S. military personnel deployed to Niger is approximately 350.

Military Operations in Cameroon in Support of U.S. Counterterrorism Objectives

As initially detailed in my report of October 14, 2015, approximately 300 U.S. military personnel deployed to Cameroon, with the consent of the Government of Cameroon, to conduct airborne intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance operations in the region. These forces are equipped with weapons for the purpose of providing their own force protection and security, and they will remain in Cameroon until their support is no longer needed.

MILITARY OPERATIONS RELATED TO THE LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY

United States military personnel with appropriate combat equipment remain deployed to various countries in the central Africa region to serve as advisors to regional forces of the African Union Regional Task Force that are working to apprehend or remove Joseph Kony and

other senior Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leaders from the battlefield, and to protect local populations. The number of U.S. military personnel deployed to the central Africa region, including advisors deployed for this mission and personnel providing logistical and support functions to this and other missions, will fluctuate at a level up to approximately 300. Additional information about military operations related to the LRA is provided in the classified annex.

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN EGYPT

Approximately 700 military personnel are assigned to or supporting the U.S. contingent of the Multinational Force and Observers, which have been present in Egypt since 1981.

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN JORDAN

At the request of the Government of Jordan, U.S. Armed Forces elements, including Patriot missile systems, artillery, fighter aircraft, and related support, command, control, and communications personnel and systems, are deployed to Jordan to support the security of Jordan and promote regional stability. The total number of U.S. forces in Jordan is approximately 2,000 U.S. military personnel. These forces will remain in Jordan, in full coordination with the Government of Jordan, until the security situation becomes such that they are no longer needed.

U.S./NATO OPERATIONS IN KOSOVO

The U.N. Security Council authorized Member States to establish a NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) in Resolution 1244 on June 10, 1999. The original mission of KFOR was to monitor, verify, and, when necessary, enforce compliance with the Military Technical Agreement between NATO and the then-Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (now Serbia), while maintaining a safe and secure environment. Today, KFOR deters renewed hostilities in cooperation with local authorities, bilateral partners, and international institutions. The principal military tasks of KFOR forces are to help maintain a safe and secure environment and to ensure freedom of movement throughout Kosovo. The U.S. contribution to KFOR is approximately 700 U.S. military personnel out of the total strength of approximately 4,600 personnel.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in all of these operations pursuant to my constitutional and statutory authority as Commander in Chief and as Chief Executive (including the authority to carry out Public Law 107–40 and other statutes), as well as my constitutional and statutory authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States. Officials of my Administration and I communicate regularly with the leadership and other Members of Congress with regard to these deployments, and we will continue to do so.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Paul D. Ryan, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Orrin G. Hatch, President pro tempore of the Senate. The letter referred to Abdirahman Sandhere, also known as "Ukash," a senior leader of the al-Shabaab terrorist organization who was killed in a U.S. airstrike in Kuunyo-Barrow, Somalia, on December 2.

The President's Weekly Address
December 12, 2015

Hello, everybody. This week, Americans across our country have shown what it means to be strong in the face of terrorism. In San Bernardino, even as the community continues to grieve, people are refusing to be ruled by fear. Across the country [county],* dedicated

* White House correction.

public servants are on the job, and more will be returning to work this week. Faith communities have come together in fellowship and prayer. Families lined the streets for the annual children's Christmas parade. Because we can't let terrorists change how we live our lives.

Meanwhile, our men and women in uniform are stepping up our campaign to destroy ISIL. Our airstrikes are hitting ISIL harder than ever in Iraq and Syria. We're taking out more of their fighters and leaders, their weapons, their oil tankers. Our special operations forces are on the ground, because we're going to hunt down these terrorists wherever they try to hide. In recent weeks, our strikes have taken out the ISIL finance chief, a terrorist leader in Somalia, and the ISIL leader in Libya. Our message to these killers is simple: We will find you, and justice will be done.

This week, we'll move forward on all fronts. On Monday, I'll go to the Pentagon. And there, I'll review our military campaign and how we can continue to accelerate our efforts. Later in the week, I'll go to the National Counterterrorism Center. There, I'll review our efforts, across our entire Government, to prevent attacks and protect our homeland. And this week, the Department of Homeland Security will update its alert system to ensure Americans get more information, including steps that you and your communities can take to be vigilant and to stay safe.

In the wake of the attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, I know a lot of Americans are asking, "What can I do?" First, as always, we have to stay vigilant. If you see something that seems suspicious, say something to law enforcement. Over the years, plots have been uncovered because someone saw something and spoke up.

As I said in my speech last weekend, one of the most important things we can do is to stay true to who we are as Americans. Terrorists like ISIL are trying to divide us along lines of religion and background. That's how they stoke fear. That's how they recruit. And just as Muslims around the world have to keep rejecting any twisted interpretation of Islam, all of us have to reject bigotry, in all of its forms. I'll say it again: Prejudice and discrimination helps ISIL, and it undermines our national security.

The good news is that Americans are coming together to reaffirm the core values that keep us strong. Political leaders across the spectrum—Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives—are standing up forcefully for freedom of religion. Churches and synagogues are reaching out to local mosques, reminding us that we are all God's children. Grateful citizens are saying thank you to our patriotic Muslim American servicemembers and veterans. Some of our greatest sports heroes have reminded us why they're true champions, and voices for tolerance and understanding. Across the country, Americans are reaching out to their Muslim friends, neighbors, and coworkers to let them know we're here for each other. I think of the woman in Texas carrying a sign saying, "We love our Muslim neighbors."

That's the message I hope every Muslim American hears, that we're all part of the same American family. And it's a message all of us can deliver: parents to our children, teachers to their students, leaders in politics and business and entertainment. Back in San Bernardino, people from across the community have joined in prayer vigils: Christians, Jews, Muslims, and others. And they've sent a powerful message: We're all in this together. That's the spirit we have to uphold. That's what we can do as Americans, united in defense of the country that we love.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:30 p.m. on December 11 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on December 12. In the address, the President referred to Muafaq Mustafa Mohammed al-Karmoush, also known as "Abu Salah," a financial operative for the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization who was killed in a U.S. airstrike outside Tal Afar, Iraq, in late November; Abdirahman Sandhere, also known as "Ukash," a senior leader of the al-Shabaab terrorist organization who was

killed in a U.S. airstrike in Kuunyo-Barrow, Somalia, on December 2; Abu Nabil, also known as "Wissam Najm Abd Zayd al-Zubaydi," an ISIL leader who was killed in a U.S. airstrike in Derna, Libya, on November 13; and Paula Criswell, member of the Bay Area Unitarian Universalist Church in Houston, TX, who participated in a rally in Webster, TX, on December 4. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 11, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 12.

Remarks on the Adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Paris Agreement
December 12, 2015

Good evening. In my first Inaugural Address, I committed this country to the tireless task of combating climate change and protecting this planet for future generations. Two weeks ago, in Paris, I said before the world that we needed a strong global agreement to accomplish this goal, an enduring agreement that reduces global carbon pollution and sets the world on a course to a low-carbon future. A few hours ago, we succeeded. We came together around the strong agreement the world needed. We met the moment.

I want to commend President Hollande and Secretary-General Ban for their leadership and for hosting such a successful summit and French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius for presiding with patience and resolve. And I want to give a special thanks to Secretary John Kerry; my Senior Adviser, Brian Deese; our chief negotiator, Todd Stern; and everyone on their teams for their outstanding work and for making America proud.

I also want to thank the people of nearly 200 nations—large and small, developed and developing—for working together to confront a threat to the people of all nations. Together, we've shown what's possible when the world stands as one.

Today the American people can be proud, because this historic agreement is a tribute to American leadership. Over the past 7 years, we've transformed the United States into the global leader in fighting climate change. In 2009, we helped salvage a chaotic Copenhagen summit and established the principle that all countries had a role to play in combating climate change. We then led by example, with historic investments in growing industries like wind and solar, creating a new and steady stream of middle class jobs. We've set the first-ever nationwide standards to limit the amount of carbon pollution power plants can dump into the air our children breathe. From Alaska to the Gulf Coast to the Great Plains, we've partnered with local leaders who are working to help their communities protect themselves from some of the most immediate impacts of a changing climate.

Now, skeptics said these actions would kill jobs. Instead, we've seen the longest streak of private sector job creation in our history. We've driven our economic output to alltime highs while driving our carbon pollution down to its lowest level in nearly two decades. And then, with our historic joint announcement with China last year, we showed it was possible to bridge the old divides between developed and developing nations that had stymied global progress for so long. That accomplishment encouraged dozens and dozens of other nations to set their own ambitious climate targets. And that was the foundation for success in Paris. Because no nation, not even one as powerful as ours, can solve this challenge alone. And no country, no matter how small, can sit on the sidelines. All of us had to solve it together.

Now, no agreement is perfect, including this one. Negotiations that involve nearly 200 nations are always challenging. Even if all the initial targets set in Paris are met, we'll only be part of the way there when it comes to reducing carbon from the atmosphere. So we cannot be complacent because of today's agreement. The problem's not solved because of this ac-

cord. But make no mistake, the Paris Agreement establishes the enduring framework the world needs to solve the climate crisis. It creates the mechanism, the architecture, for us to continually tackle this problem in an effective way.

This agreement is ambitious, with every nation setting and committing to their own specific targets, even as we take into account differences among nations. We'll have a strong system of transparency, including periodic reviews and independent assessments, to help hold every country accountable for meeting its commitments. As technology advances, this agreement allows progress to pave the way for even more ambitious targets over time. And we have secured a broader commitment to support the most vulnerable countries as they pursue cleaner economic growth.

In short, this agreement will mean less of the carbon pollution that threatens our planet, and more of the jobs and economic growth driven by low-carbon investment. Full implementation of this agreement will help delay or avoid some of the worst consequences of climate change and will pave the way for even more progress, in successive stages, over the coming years.

Moreover, this agreement sends a powerful signal that the world is firmly committed to a low-carbon future. And that has the potential to unleash investment and innovation in clean energy at a scale we have never seen before. The targets we've set are bold. And by empowering businesses, scientists, engineers, workers, and the private sector—investors—to work together, this agreement represents the best chance we've had to save the one planet that we've got.

So I believe this moment can be a turning point for the world. We've shown that the world has both the will and the ability to take on this challenge. It won't be easy. Progress won't always come quick. We cannot be complacent. While our generation will see some of the benefits of building a clean energy economy—jobs created, money saved—we may not live to see the full realization of our achievement. But that's okay. What matters is that today we can be more confident that this planet is going to be in better shape for the next generation. And that's what I care about. I imagine taking my grandkids, if I'm lucky enough to have some, to the park someday and holding their hands and hearing their laughter and watching a quiet sunset, all the while knowing that our work today prevented an alternate future that could have been grim; that our work, here and now, gave future generations cleaner air and cleaner water and a more sustainable planet. And what could be more important than that?

Today, thanks to strong, principled, American leadership, that's the world that we'll leave to our children: a world that is safer and more secure, more prosperous, and more free. And that is our most important mission in our short time here on this Earth.

Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:30 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President François Hollande of France; and U.S. Special Envoy for Climate Change Todd D. Stern.

Remarks on United States Strategy To Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia
December 14, 2015

Good morning, everybody. Today, the United States and our Armed Forces continue to lead the global coalition in our mission to destroy the terrorist group ISIL. As I outlined in my speech to the Nation last weekend, our strategy is moving forward with a great sense of urgency on four fronts: hunting down and taking out these terrorists; training and equipping Iraqi and Syrian forces to fight ISIL on the ground; stopping ISIL's operations by disrupting their recruiting, financing, and propaganda; and finally, persistent diplomacy to end the

Syrian civil war so that everyone can focus on destroying ISIL.

I just had a chance to meet with my National Security Council as part of our regular effort to review and constantly strengthen our efforts. And I want to thank Secretary Carter, Chairman Dunford, and Vice Chairman Selva for hosting us and for their leadership of our men and women in uniform. We heard from General Austin, who is leading the military campaign in the region, as well as General Votel, whose special operations forces are playing a vital role in this fight.

I want to provide all of you a brief update on our progress against the ISIL core in Syria and Iraq, because as we squeeze its heart, we'll make it harder for ISIL to pump its terror and propaganda to the rest of the world.

This fall, even before the revolting attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, I ordered new actions to intensify our war against ISIL. These actions, including more firepower and special operations forces, are well underway. This continues to be a difficult fight. As I said before, ISIL is dug in, including in urban areas, and they hide behind civilians, using defenseless men, women, and children as human shields.

So, even as we're relentless, we have to be smart, targeting ISIL surgically, with precision. At the same time, our partners on the ground are rooting ISIL out, town by town, neighborhood by neighborhood, block by block. That is what this campaign is doing.

We are hitting ISIL harder than ever. Coalition aircraft—our fighters, bombers, and drones—have been increasing the pace of airstrikes: nearly 9,000 as of today. Last month, in November, we dropped more bombs on ISIL targets than any other month since this campaign started.

We're also taking out ISIL leaders, commanders, and killers one by one. Since this spring, we've removed Abu Sayyaf, one of their top leaders; Haji Mutazz, ISIL's second in command; Junaid Hussain, a top online recruiter; Mohammed Emwazi, who brutally murdered Americans and others; and in recent weeks, finance chief Abu Saleh, senior extortionist Abu Maryam, and weapons trafficker Abu Rahman al-Tunisi. The list goes on.

We're going after ISIL from their stronghold right down—right in downtown Raqqa, to Libya, where we took out Abu Nabil, the ISIL leader there. The point is, ISIL leaders cannot hide. And our next message to them is simple: You are next.

Every day, we destroy as well more of ISIL's forces: their fighting positions, bunkers, and staging areas; their heavy weapons, bomb-making factories, compounds and training camps. In many places, ISIL has lost its freedom of maneuver, because they know if they mass their forces, we will wipe them out. In fact, since this summer, ISIL has not had a single successful major offensive operation on the ground in either Syria or Iraq. In recent weeks, we've unleashed a new wave of strikes on their lifeline, their oil infrastructure, destroying hundreds of their tanker trucks, wells, and refineries. And we're going to keep on hammering those.

ISIL also continues to lose territory in Iraq. ISIL had already lost across Kirkuk Province and at Tikrit. More recently, ISIL lost at Sinjar, losing a strategic highway. ISIL lost at Baiji, with its oil refinery. We saw daring raid—the daring raid supported by our special forces, which rescued dozens of prisoners from ISIL, and in which Master Sergeant Joshua Wheeler made the ultimate sacrifice.

So far, ISIL has lost about 40 percent of the populated areas it once controlled in Iraq. And it will lose more. Iraqi forces are now fighting their way deeper into Ramadi. They're working to encircle Fallujah and cut off ISIL supply routes into Mosul. Again, these are urban areas where ISIL is entrenched. Our partners on the ground face a very tough fight ahead, and we're going to continue to back them up with the support that they need to ultimately clear ISIL from Iraq.

ISIL also continues to lose territory in Syria. We continue to step up our air support and supplies to local forces—Syrian Kurds, Arabs, Christians, Turkmen—and they are having success. After routing ISIL at Kobani and Tal Abyad, they've pushed ISIL back from almost

across the entire border region with Turkey, and we're working with Turkey to seal the rest. ISIL has lost thousands of square miles of territory it once controlled in Syria, and it will lose more. The special forces that I ordered to Syria have begun supporting local forces as they push south, cut off supply lines, and tighten the squeeze on Raqqa.

Meanwhile, more people are seeing ISIL for the thugs and the thieves and the killers that they are. We've seen instances of ISIL fighters defecting. Others who have tried to escape have been executed. And ISIL's reign of brutality and extortion continues to repel local populations and help fuel the refugee crisis. "So many people are migrating," said one Syrian refugee. ISIL, she said, will "end up all alone."

All this said, we recognize that progress needs to keep coming faster. No one knows that more than the countless Syrians and Iraqis living every day under ISIL's terror, as well as the families in San Bernardino and Paris and elsewhere who are grieving the loss of their loved ones. Just as the United States is doing more in this fight—just as our allies France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, Australia, and Italy are doing more—so must others.

And that's why I've asked Secretary Carter to go to the Middle East—he'll depart right after this press briefing—to work with our coalition partners on securing more military contributions to this fight. On the diplomatic front, Secretary Kerry will be in Russia tomorrow as we continue to work, as part of the Vienna process, to end the Syrian civil war. Meanwhile, here at home, the Department of Homeland Security is updating its alert system to help the American people stay vigilant and safe.

And as always, our extraordinary men and women in uniform continue to put their lives on the line—in this campaign and around the world—to keep the rest of us safe. This holiday season, many of our troops are once again far from their families. And as your Commander in Chief, on behalf of the American people, we want to say thank you. We are grateful, and we are proud for everything that you do. Because of you, the America that we know and love and cherish is leading the world in this fight. Because of you, I am confident that we are going to prevail.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:47 p.m. in the Press Briefing Room. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter; Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., USMC, Chairman, and Gen. Paul J. Selva, USAF, Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, USA, commander, U.S. Central Command; and Gen. Joseph L. Votel, USA, commanding general, Joint Special Operations Command.

Remarks at a Naturalization Ceremony at the National Archives and Records Administration
December 15, 2015

The President. Thank you. Please have a seat. Thank you. Well, good morning, everybody.

Audience members. Good morning!

The President. Thank you, Deputy Secretary Mayorkas, Judge Roberts, Director Rodriguez. Thank you to our Archivist, David Ferriero, and everyone at the National Archives for hosting us here today in this spectacular setting.

And to my fellow Americans, our newest citizens, I'm so excited. [*Laughter*] You are men and women from more than 25 countries, from Brazil to Uganda, from Iraq to the Philippines. You may come from teeming cities or rural villages. You don't look alike. You don't worship the same way. But here, surrounded by the very documents whose values bind us together as one people, you've raised your hand and sworn a sacred oath. I'm proud to be among the first to greet you as "my fellow Americans."

What a remarkable journey all of you have made. And as of today, your story is forever woven into the larger story of this Nation. In

the brief time that we have together, I want to share that story with you. Because even as you've put in the work required to become a citizen, you still have a demanding and rewarding task ahead of you, and that is the hard work of active citizenship. You have rights and you have responsibilities. And now you have to help us write the next great chapter in America's story.

Just about every nation in the world, to some extent, admits immigrants. But there's something unique about America. We don't simply welcome new immigrants, we don't simply welcome new arrivals, we are born of immigrants. That is who we are. Immigration is our origin story. And for more than two centuries, it's remained at the core of our national character. It's our oldest tradition. It's who we are. It's part of what makes us exceptional.

After all, unless your family is Native American, one of the First Americans, our families—all of our families—come from someplace else. The first refugees were the Pilgrims themselves, fleeing religious persecution, crossing the stormy Atlantic to reach a new world where they might live and pray freely. Eight signers of the Declaration of Independence were immigrants. And in those first decades after independence, English, German, and Scottish immigrants came over, huddled on creaky ships, seeking what Thomas Paine called "asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty. . . ."

Down through the decades, Irish Catholics fleeing hunger, Italians fleeing poverty filled up our cities, rolled up their sleeves, built America. Chinese laborers jammed in steerage under the decks of steamships, making their way to California to build the Central Pacific Railroad that would transform the West and our Nation. Wave after wave of men, women, and children—from the Middle East and the Mediterranean, from Asia and Africa—poured into Ellis Island or Angel Island, their trunks bursting with their most cherished possessions—maybe a photograph of the family they left behind; a family Bible or a Torah or a Koran; a bag in one hand, maybe a child in the other—standing for hours in long lines. New York and cities across America were transformed into a sort of global fashion show. You had Dutch lace caps and the North African fezzes, stodgy tweed suits, colorful Caribbean dresses.

And perhaps, like some of you, these new arrivals might have had some moments of doubt, wondering if they had made a mistake in leaving everything and everyone they ever knew behind. So life in America was not always easy. It wasn't always easy for new immigrants. Certainly, it wasn't easy for those of African heritage who had not come here voluntarily and yet in their own way were immigrants themselves. There was discrimination and hardship and poverty. But, like you, they no doubt found inspiration in all those who had come before them. And they were able to muster faith that, here in America, they might build a better life and give their children something more.

Just as so many have come here in search of a dream, others sought shelter from nightmares: survivors of the Holocaust; Soviet refuseniks; refugees from Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia; Iraqis and Afghans fleeing war; Mexicans, Cubans, Iranians leaving behind deadly revolutions; Central American teenagers running from gang violence; the Lost Boys of Sudan escaping civil war. They're people like Fulbert Florent Akoula from the Republic of Congo, who was granted asylum when his family was threatened by political violence. And today Fulbert is here, a proud American.

We can never say it often or loudly enough: Immigrants and refugees revitalize and renew America. Immigrants like you are more likely to start your own business. Many of the Fortune 500 companies in this country were founded by immigrants or their children. Many of the tech startups in Silicon Valley have at least one immigrant founder.

Immigrants are the teachers who inspire our children, and they're the doctors who keep us healthy. They're the engineers who design our skylines and the artists and the entertainers who touch our hearts. Immigrants are soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, coastguardsmen who protect us, often risking their lives for an

America that isn't even their own yet. As an Iraqi, Muhanned Ibrahim Al Naib was the target of death threats for working with American forces. He stood by his American comrades and came to the U.S. as a refugee. And today we stand by him. And we are proud to welcome Muhanned as a citizen of the country that he already helped to defend.

We celebrate this history, this heritage, as an immigrant nation. And we should be strong enough to acknowledge, as painful as it may be, that we haven't always lived up to our own ideals. We haven't always lived up to these documents.

From the start, Africans were brought here in chains against their will and then toiled under the whip. They also built America. A century ago, New York City shops displayed those signs, "No Irish Need Apply." Catholics were targeted, their loyalty questioned, so much so that as recently as the 1950s and sixties, when JFK had to run, he had to convince people that his allegiance wasn't primarily to the Pope.

Chinese immigrants faced persecution and vicious stereotypes and were, for a time, even banned from entering America. During World War II, German and Italian residents were detained, and in one of the darkest chapters in our history, Japanese immigrants and even Japanese American citizens were forced from their homes and imprisoned in camps. We succumbed to fear. We betrayed not only our fellow Americans, but our deepest values. We betrayed these documents. It's happened before.

And the biggest irony of course was, is that those who betrayed these values were themselves the children of immigrants. How quickly we forget. One generation passes, two generation passes, and suddenly, we don't remember where we came from. And we suggest that somehow there is "us" and there is "them," not remembering we used to be "them."

On days like today, we need to resolve never to repeat mistakes like that again. We must resolve to always speak out against hatred and bigotry in all of its forms, whether taunts against the child of an immigrant farmworker or threats against a Muslim shopkeeper. We are Americans. Standing up for each other is what the values enshrined in the documents in this room compels us to do, especially when it's hard, especially when it's not convenient. That's when it counts. That's when it matters: not when things are easy, but when things are hard.

The truth is, being an American is hard. Being part of a democratic government is hard. Being a citizen is hard. It is a challenge. It's supposed to be. There's no respite from our ideals. All of us are called to live up to our expectations for ourselves, not just when it's convenient, but when it's inconvenient, when it's tough, when we're afraid. The tension throughout our history between welcoming or rejecting the stranger, it's about more than just immigration. It's about the meaning of America, what kind of country do we want to be. It's about the capacity of each generation to honor the creed as old as our founding: *E pluribus unum*—that out of many, we are one.

Scripture tells us, "For we are strangers before you, and sojourners, as were all our fathers." We are strangers before you. In the Mexican immigrant today, we see the Catholic immigrant of a century ago. In the Syrian seeking refuge today, we should see the Jewish refugee of World War II. In these new Americans, we see our own American stories: our parents, our grandparents, our aunts, our uncles, our cousins who packed up what they could and scraped together what they had. And their paperwork wasn't always in order. And they set out for a place that was more than just a piece of land, but an idea.

America: a place where we can be a part of something bigger. A place where we can contribute our talents and fulfill our ambitions and secure new opportunity for ourselves and for others. A place where we can retain pride in our heritage, but where we recognize that we have a common creed, a loyalty to these documents, a loyalty to our democracy; where we can criticize our government, but understand that we love it; where we agree to live together even when we don't agree with each other; where we work through the democratic process, and not through violence or sectarianism, to resolve disputes; where we live side by side

as neighbors; and where our children know themselves to be a part of this Nation, no longer strangers, but the bedrock of this Nation, the essence of this Nation.

And that's why today is not the final step in your journey. More than 60 years ago, at a ceremony like this one, Senator John F. Kennedy said, "No form of government requires more of its citizens than does the American democracy." Our system of self-government depends on ordinary citizens doing the hard, frustrating, but always essential work of citizenship: of being informed; of understanding that the Government isn't some distant thing, but is you; of speaking out when something is not right; of helping fellow citizens when they need a hand; of coming together to shape our country's course.

And that work gives purpose to every generation. It belongs to me. It belongs to the judge. It belongs to you. It belongs to you, all of us, as citizens: to follow our laws, yes, but also to engage with your communities and to speak up for what you believe in and to vote; to not only exercise the rights that are now yours, but to stand up for the rights of others.

Birtukan Gudeya is here from Ethiopia. She said: "The joy of being an American is the joy of freedom and opportunity. We have been handed a work in progress, one that can evolve for the good of all Americans." I couldn't have said it better.

That is what makes America great, not just the words on these founding documents, as precious and valuable as they are, but the progress that they've inspired. If you ever wonder whether America is big enough to hold multitudes, strong enough to withstand the forces of change, brave enough to live up to our ideals even in times of trial, then look to the generations of ordinary citizens who have proven again and again that we are worthy of that.

That's our great inheritance: what ordinary people have done to build this country and make these words live. And it's our generation's task to follow their example in this journey, to keep building an America where no matter who we are or what we look like or who we love or what we believe, we can make of our lives what we will.

You will not and should not forget your history and your past. That adds to the richness of American life. But you are now American. You've got obligations as citizens. And I'm absolutely confident you will meet them. You'll set a good example for all of us, because you know how precious this thing is. It's not something to take for granted. It's something to cherish and to fight for.

Thank you. May God bless you. May God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:56 a.m. in the Rotunda for the Charters of Freedom. In his remarks, he referred to Richard W. Roberts, Chief Judge, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia; Leon Rodriguez, Director, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services; and Washington, DC, resident Muhanned Ibrahim Al Naib, who has changed his name to Zachary Abraham O'Brien. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on the Designation of Adewale Adeyemo as Deputy National Security Adviser for International Economics
December 15, 2015

For the past 4 years, I have relied on Caroline Atkinson, most recently as my Deputy National Security Advisor for International Economics, as we've navigated pressing challenges to the global economy. As my representative at the G–7 and G–20, she played a key role in coordinating our response to international financial crises, worked with our allies to devise and implement targeted economic sanctions to advance our national security goals, played a vital role in our economic engagements with China, and helped to achieve breakthrough agree-

ments on climate that will strengthen our economy and our security. I've relied on, and benefited from, Caroline's knowledge and judgment, and as she concludes her tenure on my national security team, I am deeply appreciative of her service.

I am grateful that Caroline's work will be carried on by Adewale "Wally" Adeyemo, who has served in my administration since 2009. At the Treasury Department, he was part of the team that helped coordinate our response to the global recession, laying the foundation for renewed growth at home and abroad. He helped establish the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, and he's been our point person on a range of international economic issues, including negotiations on strong currency agreements around the Trans-Pacific Partnership. I will be calling on Wally's intellect, judgment, and dedication as we sustain America's global economic leadership, which reinforces our national security, and as we work with allies and partners around the world to create jobs and opportunity for all our people.

Remarks Following a Briefing at the National Counterterrorism Center in McLean, Virginia

December 17, 2015

As President and Commander in Chief, my highest priority is the security of the American people. And on a regular basis, I convene members of my national security team for an in-depth review of our efforts to prevent terrorist attacks against our citizens, around the world and here at home. We examine any known and emerging threats, we review our security posture, and we make sure that we're taking every necessary measure to protect our people.

Today I wanted to hold our meeting here, rather than at the—in the Situation Room at the White House. I wanted to hold it at the National Counterterrorism Center, because this is the hub of where so many of our experts and efforts come together. And I want to thank our Director of National Intelligence, Clapper—Jim Clapper—as well as NCTC Director Nick Rasmussen, and everybody at NCTC—all of you—for welcoming us here today.

Now, Nick, along with CIA Director Brennan and FBI Director Comey, provided a threat briefing. And Director Comey and Attorney General Lynch updated us on the investigation into the San Bernardino attacks. I reiterated that the investigation will continue to have the full support of the Federal Government and that we should leave no stone unturned in determining why and how these terrorists carried out that tragedy. Secretary of Homeland Security Johnson updated us on the measures we're taking here at home to increase awareness, stay vigilant, and enhance the safety of the traveling public, especially with so many Americans traveling during the holidays.

After the terrorist attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, I know that a lot of Americans were anxious. And that's understandable. It's natural. Now, what matters most to all of us are our friends and our families and our communities and their safety. That's true of folks inside of government as well as outside of government. But here's what I want every American to know. Since 9/11, we've taken extraordinary steps to strengthen our homeland security—our borders, our ports, our airports, our aviation security, including enhanced watch lists and screening. And we've gotten much better—thanks in part to the people in this room—of preventing large, complex attacks like 9/11.

Moreover—and I think everybody here will agree—we have the very best intelligence, counterterrorism, homeland security, and law enforcement professionals in the world. Our folks are the best. Now, across our Government, these dedicated professionals, including here at NCTC, are relentless, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. At the operations center here, people from across our Government work

literally shoulder to shoulder, pouring over the latest information, analyzing it, integrating it, connecting the dots. They're sharing information, pushing it out across the Federal Government and, just as importantly, to our State and local partners. In other words, what you see here today is one strong, united team.

So our professionals have a remarkable record of success. Of course, when terrorists pull off a despicable act like what happened in San Bernardino, it tears at our hearts. But it also stiffens our resolve to learn whatever lessons we can and to make any improvements that are needed. In the meantime, what the world doesn't always see are the successes: those terrorist plots that have been prevented. And that's how it should be. This work oftentimes demands secrecy. But as Americans, we should not forget how good these patriots are. Over the years, they have taken countless terrorists off the battlefield. They have disrupted plots. They've thwarted attacks. They have saved American lives.

And so, for everybody who is involved in our counterterrorism efforts, I want to say thank you, and the American people thank you.

Now, I want to repeat what my team just told me. At this moment, our intelligence and counterterrorism professionals do not have any specific and credible information about an attack on the homeland. That said, we have to be vigilant. As I indicated in my address to the Nation last week, we are in a new phase of terrorism, including lone actors and small groups of terrorists like those in San Bernardino. Because they are smaller, often self-initiating, self-motivating, they're harder to detect, and that makes it harder to prevent.

But just as the threat evolves, so do we. We're constantly adapting, constantly improving, upping our game, getting better. And today, the mission to protect our homeland goes on, on three main fronts.

First, we're going after terrorists over there, where they plot and plan and spew their propaganda. As I described at the Pentagon, we're hitting ISIL harder than ever in Syria and Iraq. We are taking out their leaders. Our partners on the ground are fighting to push ISIL back, and ISIL has been losing territory.

Our special operations forces are hard at work. We took out the ISIL leader in Libya. We've taken out terrorists in Yemen and Somalia. So we're sending a message: If you target Americans, you will have no safe haven. We will find you, and we will defend our Nation.

Meanwhile, as always, we're working to protect Americans overseas, including our military bases and servicemembers. And Secretary John Kerry updated us on security at our Embassies and our diplomatic posts.

Second, we continue to do everything in our power to prevent terrorists from getting into the United States. We're doing more with countries around the world, including our European partners, to prevent the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, both to places like Syria and Iraq and back into our countries.

We're implementing additional layers of security for visitors who come here under the Visa Waiver Program, and we're working with Congress to make further improvements. Any refugee coming to the United States—some of them victims of terrorism themselves—will continue to get the most intensive scrutiny of any arrival. They go through up to 2 years of vetting, including biometric screening. And the review that I ordered into the fiancé(e) visa program, under which the female terrorist in San Bernardino came here, is ongoing.

Third, we're stepping up our efforts to prevent attacks here at home. As I said, the NCTC is constantly sharing information with our State and local partners. Across the country more than 100 joint terrorism task forces are the action arm of this fight: Federal, State, and local experts all working together to disrupt threats. At the State level, fusion cells are receiving tips and pushing information out to local law enforcement. And just yesterday the Department of Homeland Security updated its alert system to make sure Americans are getting the most timely and useful information.

And with groups like ISIL trying to radicalize people to violence, especially online, part of our meeting today focused on how we can continue to strengthen our partnership between

law enforcement, high-tech leaders, communities, faith leaders, and citizens. But we've got to keep on building up trust and cooperation that helps communities inoculate themselves from the kind of propaganda that ISIL is spewing out, preventing their loved ones—especially young people—from succumbing to terrorist ideologies in the first place.

And finally, one of our greatest weapons against terrorism is our own strength and resilience as a people. Now, that means staying vigilant. If you see something suspicious, say something to law enforcement. It also means staying united as one American family, remembering that our greatest allies in this fight are each other, Americans of all faiths and all backgrounds. And when Americans stand together, nothing can beat us.

Most of all, we cannot give in to fear or change how we live our lives, because that's what terrorists want. That's the only leverage that they have. They can't defeat us on a battlefield, but they can lead us to change in ways that would undermine what this country is all about. And that's what we have to guard against. We have to remind ourselves that when we stray—stay true to our values, nothing can beat us.

So anyone trying to harm Americans need to know—they need to know that we're strong and that we're resilient, that we will not be terrorized. We've prevailed over much greater threats than this. We will prevail again.

So I want to once again thank all of you at NCTC and every one of your home agencies across our entire Government for your extraordinary service. I want every American to know—as you go about the holidays, as you travel and gather with family and the kids open their presents, and as you ring in the new year—that you've got dedicated patriots working around the clock all across the country to protect us all. Oftentimes, they're doing so by sacrificing their own holidays and their own time with families. But they care about this deeply, and they're the best in the world. And for that, we're very grateful.

Thank you, everybody. Happy holidays.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:58 p.m. at the National Counterterrorism Center. In his remarks, he referred to Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik, suspected perpetrators of the terrorist attack at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, CA, on December 2. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Statement on United States Policy Toward Cuba
December 17, 2015

One year ago, I announced that after more than 50 years, America would change its relationship with Cuba and put the interests of the people of both countries before the outdated ways of the past. Since then, we have taken important steps forward to normalize relations between our countries: reestablishing diplomatic relations and opening Embassies; facilitating greater travel and commerce; connecting more Americans and Cubans; and promoting the free flow of information to, from, and within Cuba. We are advancing our shared interests and working together on complex issues that for too long defined—and divided—us. Meanwhile, the United States is in a stronger position to engage the people and governments of our hemisphere. Congress can support a better life for the Cuban people by lifting an embargo that is a legacy of a failed policy.

Today, the Stars and Stripes again fly over our Embassy in Havana. Today, more Americans are visiting Cuba and engaging the Cuban people than at any time in the last 50 years. We continue to have differences with the Cuban Government, but we raise those issues directly, and we will always stand for human rights and the universal values that we support around the globe. Change does not happen overnight, and normalization will be a long journey. The last 12 months, however, are a reminder of the progress we can make when we set the course toward a better future.

Over the next year, we will continue on this path, empowering Cubans and Americans to lead the way.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this statement.

The President's News Conference
December 18, 2015

The President. Good afternoon, everybody. Clearly, this is not the most important event that's taking place in the White House today. There is a screening of "Star Wars" for Gold Star families and children coming up. So I'll try to be relatively succinct. Let me say a few words about the year behind us and the year ahead, and then I'll take a few questions.

As I look back on this year, one thing I see is that so much of our steady, persistent work over the years is paying off for the American people in big, tangible ways. Our early actions to rescue the economy set the stage for the longest streak of private sector job growth on record, with 13.7 million new jobs in that time. The unemployment rate has been cut in half, down to 5 percent. And most importantly, wages grew faster than at any time since the recovery began. So, over the course of this year, a lot of the decisions that we made early on have paid off.

Years of steady implementation of the Affordable Care Act helped to drive the rate of the uninsured in America below 10 percent for the first time since records were kept on that. Health care prices have grown at their lowest level in five decades, 17 million more Americans have gained coverage, and we now know that 6 million people have signed up through healthcare.gov for coverage beginning on January 1—600,000 on Tuesday alone. New customers are up one-third over last year. And the more who sign up, the stronger the system becomes. And that's good news for every American who no longer has to worry about being just one illness or accident away from financial hardship.

On climate, our early investment in clean energy ignited a clean energy industry boom. Our actions to help reduce our carbon emissions brought China to the table. And last week, in Paris, nearly 200 nations forged an historic agreement that was only possible because of American leadership.

Around the world—from reaching the deal to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon to reestablishing diplomatic relations with Cuba, to concluding a landmark trade agreement that will make sure that American workers and American businesses are operating on a level playing field and that we, rather than China or other countries, are setting the rules for global trade—we have shown what is possible when America leads.

And after decades of dedicated advocacy, marriage equality became a reality in all 50 States.

So I just want to point out, I said at the beginning of this year that interesting stuff happens in the fourth quarter, and we are only halfway through.

I do want to thank Congress for ending the year on a high note. I got to sign an education bill that is going to fix some of the challenges that we had with No Child Left Behind and promises to invest more in high-quality early childhood education. We signed a transportation bill that, although not as robust as I think we need, still allows States and local governments to plan and actually get moving, putting people back to work rebuilding our roads and our bridges. We got Ex-Im Bank back to work supporting American exports.

And today they passed a bipartisan budget deal. I'm not wild about everything in it—I'm sure that's true for everybody—but it is a budget that, as I insisted, invests in our military and our middle class, without ideological provisions that would have weakened Wall Street reform or rules on big polluters.

It's part of an agreement that will permanently extend tax credits to 24 million working families. It includes some long-sought wins like strengthening America's leadership at the

IMF. And because it eliminates the possibility of a shutdown for the first time—or for the first 9 months of next year, Congress and I have a long runway to get some important things done on behalf of the American people.

Now, there's still a lot of work to do. For example, there's still a lot more that Congress can do to promote job growth and increase wages in this country. I still want to work with Congress—both Democrats and Republicans—to reform our criminal justice system. And earlier today I commuted the sentences of 95 men and women who had served their debt to society, another step forward in upholding our fundamental ideals of justice and fairness.

And of course, our most important job is to keep Americans safe. I've had a lot to say about that this week, but let me reiterate, the United States continues to lead a global coalition in our mission to destroy ISIL. ISIL has already lost about 40 percent of the populated areas it once controlled in Iraq, and it's losing territory in Syria. As we keep up the pressure, our air campaign will continue to hit ISIL harder than ever, taking out their leaders, their commanders, and their forces. We're stepping up our support for partners on the ground as they push ISIL back. Our men and women in uniform are carrying out their mission with trademark professionalism and courage. And this holiday season, all of us are united in our gratitude for their service, and we are thankful to their families as well, because they serve alongside those who are actually deployed.

Squeezing ISIL's heart—its core in Syria and Iraq—will make it harder for them to pump their terror and propaganda to the rest of the world. At the same time, as we know from San Bernardino, where I'll visit with families later today, we have to remain vigilant here at home. Our counterterrorism, intelligence, homeland security, and law enforcement communities are working 24/7 to protect our homeland. And all of us can do our part by staying vigilant, by saying something if we see something that is suspicious, by refusing to be terrorized, and by staying united as one American family.

In short, for all the very real progress America has made over the past 7 years, we still have some unfinished business. And I plan on doing everything I can with every minute of every day that I have left as President to deliver on behalf of the American people. Since taking this office, I've never been more optimistic about a year ahead than I am right now. And in 2016, I'm going to leave it out all on the field.

So, with that, let me take some questions. I'll start with Roberta Rampton of Reuters.

Counterterrorism/Electronic Surveillance

Q. Mr. President, you're going to California today. And as you said earlier this week, you told the Nation that there's no specific or credible threat of a similar attack. But how is it really possible to know? I mean, aren't similar plots going to be just as hard to detect beforehand? And some lawmakers are saying that your Government should review the social media of all people applying for visas to come to this country. What do you think of that idea? Should that be mandatory?

The President. Well, Roberta, you're absolutely right that it is very difficult for us to detect lone-wolf plots—or plots involving a husband and wife, in this case—because despite the incredible vigilance that—and professionalism of all our law enforcement, homeland security, et cetera, it's not that different from us trying to detect the next mass shooter. You don't always see it. They're not always communicating publicly, and if you're not catching what they say publicly, then it becomes a challenge.

We are continuing to work at every level to make sure that there's no slip between information sharing among agencies. We're continuing to strengthen our information sharing with foreign countries. And because, in part, of the tragedy in Paris, I think you're seeing much greater cooperation from our European partners on these issues.

But this is a different kind of challenge than the sort that we had with an organization like Al Qaida that involved highly trained operatives who are working as cells or as a network. Here, essentially, you have ISIL trying to

encourage or induce somebody who may be prey to this kind of propaganda. And it becomes more difficult to see. It does mean that they're less likely to be able to carry out large, complex attacks. But as we saw in San Bernardino, obviously, you can still do enormous damage.

The issue of reviewing social media for those who are obtaining visas, I think, may have gotten garbled a little bit, because there may be—it's important to distinguish between posts that are public—social media on a Facebook page—versus private communications through various social media or apps. And our law enforcement and intelligence professionals are constantly monitoring public posts, and that is part of the visa review process, that people are investigating what individuals have said publicly and questioned about any statements that they maybe made.

But if you have a private communications between two individuals, that's harder to discern, by definition. And one of the things we'll be doing is engaging with the high-tech community to find out how we can, in an appropriate way, do a better job, if we have a lead, to be able to track a suspected terrorist. But we're going to have to recognize that no government is going to have the capacity to read every single person's text or e-mails or social media. If it's not posted publicly, then there are going to be feasibility issues that are probably insurmountable at some level, and it raises questions about our values.

I mean, keep in mind it was only a couple of years ago where we were having a major debate about whether the Government was becoming too much like Big Brother. And overall, I think we've struck the right balance in protecting civil liberties and making sure that U.S. citizens' privacy is preserved, that we are making sure that there's oversight to what our intelligence agencies do. But we're going to have to continue to balance our needs for security with people's legitimate concerns about privacy.

And because the Internet is global and communication systems are global, the values that we apply here oftentimes are ones that folks who are trying to come into the country are also benefiting from because they're using the same technologies. But this is precisely why we're working very hard to bring law enforcement, intelligence, and high-tech companies together. Because we're going to have to really review what we can do both technically as well as consistent with our laws and our values in order to try to discern more rapidly some of the potential threats that may be out there. Okay?

David Jackson [USA Today].

Guantanamo Bay Detention Center

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. A Gitmo question. Congress has made it pretty clear that they're just not going to let you transfer prisoners to the United States for trial. But some people think you already have the executive authority to transfer those prisoners and close Gitmo itself next year. My question is, do you believe you have that authority, and are you willing to exercise it to close that place?

The President. Well, first of all, we've been working systematically—another example of persistence—in reducing the population. We have a review process. Those who are eligible for transfer we locate in countries that have accepted some of these detainees. They monitor them, and it's been determined that they can be transferred. And my expectation is, by early next year, we should have reduced that population below a hundred. And we will continue to steadily chip away at the numbers in Guantanamo.

There's going to come to a point where we have an irreducible population: people who pose a significant threat, but for various reasons, it's difficult for us to try them in an Article III court. Some of those folks are going through the military commission process. But there's going to be a challenge there.

Now, at that stage, I'm presenting a plan to Congress about how we can close Guantanamo. I'm not going to automatically assume that Congress says no. I'm not being coy, David. I think it's fair to say that there's going to be significant resistance from some quarters to that. But I think we can make a very strong argu-

ment that it doesn't make sense for us to be spending an extra $100 million, $200 million, $300 million, $500 million, a billion dollars, to have a secure setting for 50, 60, 70 people. And we will wait until Congress has definitively said no to a well-thought-out plan with numbers attached to it before we say anything definitive about my executive authority here. I think it's far preferable if I can get stuff done with Congress.

Q. It's an election year. You know they're not going to deal with it. Are you going to—[*inaudible*]—on your own?

The President. David, as I said—and I think you've seen me on a whole bunch of issues like immigration—I'm not going to be forward leaning on what I can do without Congress before I've tested what I can do with Congress. And every once in a while, they'll surprise you, and this may be one of those places, because I think we can make a really strong argument: Guantanamo continues to be one of the key magnets for jihadi recruitment.

To Roberta's question earlier about how do they propagandize and convince somebody here in the United States who may not have a criminal record or a history of terrorist activity to start shooting, this is part of what they feed, this notion of a gross injustice, that America is not living up to its professed ideals. We know that. We see the Internet traffic. We see how Guantanamo has been used to create this mythology that America is at war with Islam. And for us to close it is part of our counterterrorism strategy that is supported by our military, our diplomatic, and our intelligence teams.

So when you combine that with the fact that it's really expensive, that we are essentially at this point detaining a handful of people and each person is costing several million dollars to detain, when there are more efficient ways of doing it, I think we can make a strong argument.

I—but I'll take your point that it will be an uphill battle. Now, every battle I've had with Congress over the last 5 years have been—has been uphill and—but we keep on surprising you by actually getting some stuff done.

Q. But you acted on your own with immigration.

The President. Sometimes, that may prove necessary, but we try not to get out ahead of ourselves on that.

Julie Pace [Associated Press].

Arab Spring/Egypt/Libya/Syria

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I wanted to ask you about some of the broader challenges in the Middle East.

The President. Yes.

Q. Some of the Republicans who are running for President have argued that the Mideast and the United States would be safer if you hadn't had regime change in places like Iraq, Libya, and Egypt. And having gone through the experience of the Arab Spring and the aftermath, I wonder what you now see the U.S. role in the Middle East in terms of trying to push dictators out of power. Would you advise future Presidents to call for authoritarian leaders to step down as you did? And just specifically on Syria, at this point, is it your expectation that Bashar Asad's Presidency will outlast yours?

The President. There's been a lot of revisionist history, sometimes by the same people making different arguments depending on the situation. So maybe it's useful just for us to go back over some of these issues.

We did not depose Hosni Mubarak. Millions of Egyptians did, because of their dissatisfaction with the corruption and authoritarianism of the regime. We had a working relationship with Mubarak. We didn't trigger the Arab Spring. And the notion that somehow the U.S. was in a position to pull the strings on a country that is the largest in the Arab world, I think, is a—is mistaken.

What is true is that at the point at which the choice becomes mowing down millions of people or trying to find some transition, we believed—and I would still argue—that it was more sensible for us to find a peaceful transition to the Egyptian situation.

With respect to Libya, Libya is sort of a alternative version of Syria in some ways, because by the time the international coalition

interceded in Syria [Libya],* chaos had already broken out. You already had the makings of a civil war. You had a dictator who was threatening and was in a position to carry out the wholesale slaughter of large numbers of people. And we worked under U.N. mandate with a coalition of folks in order to try to avert a big humanitarian catastrophe that would not have been good for us.

Those who now argue, in retrospect, we should have left Qaddafi in there seem to forget that he had already lost legitimacy and control of his country, and we could have—instead of what we have in Libya now, we could have had another Syria in Libya now. The problem with Libya was the fact that there was a failure on the part of the entire international community—and I think that the United States has some accountability—for not moving swiftly enough and underestimating the need to rebuild government there quickly. And as a consequence, you now have a very bad situation.

And as far as Syria goes, I think it is entirely right and proper for the United States of America to speak out on behalf of its values. And when you have an authoritarian leader that is killing hundreds of thousands of his own people, the notion that we would just stand by and say nothing is contrary to who we are. And that does not serve our interests. Because, at that point, us being in collusion with that kind of governance would make us even more of a target for terrorist activity, would——

Q. Even if that Government can cope—try to stop extremists——

The President. Well, but——

Q. ——from building up in their countries?

The President. The reason that Asad has been a problem in Syria is because that is a majority-Sunni country and he had lost the space that he had early on to execute an inclusive transition, peaceful transition. He chose instead to slaughter people. And once that happened, the idea that a minority population there could somehow crush tens of millions of people who oppose him is not feasible. It's not plausible. Even if you were being cold eyed and hard hearted about the human toll there, it just wouldn't happen. And as a consequence, our view has been that you cannot bring peace to Syria, you cannot get an end to the civil war unless you have a government that is recognized as legitimate by a majority of that country. It will not happen.

And this is the argument that I've had repeatedly with Mr. Putin, dating 5 years ago, at which time his suggestion—as I gather some Republicans are now suggesting—was Asad is not so bad, let him just be as brutal and repressive as he can, but at least, he'll keep order. I said, look, the problem is that the history of trying to keep order when a large majority of the country has turned against you is not good. And 5 years later, I was right.

So we now have an opportunity—and John Kerry is meeting, as we speak, with Syria and Turkey and Iran and the Gulf countries and other parties who are interested—we now have an opportunity, not to turn back the clock—it's going to be very difficult to completely overcome the devastation that's happened in Syria already—but to find a political transition that maintains the Syrian state, that recognizes there are a bunch of a stakeholders inside of Syria, and hopefully, to initiate a cease-fire that won't be perfect, but allows all the parties to turn on what should be our number-one focus, and that is destroying Daesh and its allies in the region.

And that is going to be a difficult process. It's going to be a painstaking process. But there is no shortcut to that. And that's not based on some idealism on my part, that's a hard-headed calculation about what's going to be required to get the job done.

Q. Do you think that Asad, though, potentially could remain in power a year from now?

The President. I think that Asad is going to have to leave in order for the country to stop the bloodletting and for all the parties involved to be able to move forward in a nonsectarian way. I—he has lost legitimacy in the eyes of a large majority of the country.

* White House correction.

Now, is there a way of us constructing a bridge creating a political transition that allows those who are allied with Asad right now—allows the Russians, allows the Iranians—to ensure that their equities are respected, that minorities like the Alawites are not crushed or retribution is not the order of the day? I think that's going to be very important as well.

And that's what makes this so difficult. Sadly, had Asad made a decision earlier that he was not more important personally than his entire country, that kind of political transition would have been much easier. It's a lot harder now. But John Kerry has been doing some excellent work in moving that process forward. And I do think that you've seen from the Russians a recognition that, after a couple of months, they're not really moving the needle that much in—despite a sizeable deployment inside of Syria. And of course, that's what I suggested would happen, because there's only so much bombing you can do when an entire country is outraged and believes that its ruler doesn't represent them.

Cheryl Bolen [Bloomberg BNA].

Federal Budget/Former Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner/Speaker of the House Paul D. Ryan/The President's Legislative Agenda

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I'd like to ask you about the surprising Congress. Specifically, what are your top legislative priorities for next year? And how has the new Speaker, Paul Ryan, changed the dynamic with you and Capitol Hill? And can you be more ambitious next year, doing things like maybe completing the Transatlantic Trade Partnership or even getting tax reform?

The President. Well, first of all, it's important to give some credit where credit is due. John Boehner did a favor to all of us, including now Speaker Ryan, by working with us to agree on a topline budget framework. That was the basis for subsequent negotiations. He was able to do that because he was going out the door and was then given, I think, a little more room to maneuver than he previously had.

Having said that, I also want to give Speaker Ryan credit. I called both him and Mitch McConnell, as well as Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid, for the orderly way in which they actually negotiated a budget—the way Congress is historically and typically supposed to work. I mean, we've gotten kind of used to last-minute crises and shutdown threats, and so forth. And this is a messy process that doesn't satisfy everybody completely, but it's more typical of American democracy. And I think that Speaker Ryan deserves a role in that.

I will say that in his interactions with me, he has been professional; he has reached out to tell me what he can do and what he cannot do. I think it's a good working relationship. We recognize that we disagree on a whole bunch of other stuff and have fundamentally different visions for where we want to move the country. But perhaps because even before he was elected he had worked on Capitol Hill, I think he is respectful of the process and respectful of how legislation works. So kudos to him, as well as all the leaders and appropriators who were involved in this process.

Now, I just want to repeat—because sometimes we take for granted what's happened—I said early on in this process that I wasn't going to sign a budget that did not relieve sequester, this artificial austerity that was making it difficult for us to invest in things like education and our military. And I said I would not accept a lot of ideological riders that were attached to a big budget deal. And we met our goals.

And because of some terrific negotiations by the Democrats up on Capitol Hill and, I think, some pretty good work by our legislative staffs here, we're going to be able to fund environmental protection. We're going to be able to make sure that we're investing in things like early childhood education and making college more affordable. We're going to be able to implement the Clean Power Plant rule. We're going to be able to continue to invest in clean energy that spurs on innovation. We're going to be able to make sure that our military gets the equipment and the training that it needs in order to be effective in fighting ISIL and other threats around the world.

So it was a good win. And there are some things in there that I don't like, but that's the nature of legislation and compromise. And I think the system worked.

That gives me some optimism that next year, on a narrow set of issues, we can get some more work done. Now, as David said, it's an election year. And obviously, a lot of the legislative process is going to be skewed by people looking over their shoulders, worrying about primaries, trying to position themselves relative to the Presidential candidates. So that makes it harder. But I think there are going to be a handful of areas where we can make real progress.

One of them you already mentioned, Trans-Pacific Partnership, which now has been out, Congress has had a chance to review. And it meets the bar that I set. It is consistent with what I promised, which is the most prolabor, proenvironment, progressive trade deal in history, that eliminates just about every tariff on American manufacturing goods in countries that up until this point have charged a tax, essentially, on anything that American workers and American businesses sell in these areas. It brings those taxes down to zero on basically all of American-manufactured products, a huge win for agriculture, because now the people of Japan are going to be in a better position to enjoy American beef and American pork, which up until this point, even though we're much more efficient producers, has been tagged with a tax that makes our products uncompetitive in Japanese markets.

So this is a big deal. And I think Speaker Ryan would like to try to get it done. And there are both proponents and opponents of this in both Democratic and Republican parties, and so it's going to be an interesting situation where we're going to have to stitch together the same kind of bipartisan effort in order for us to get it done.

A second area that I think is possible is criminal justice reform. There has been sincere, serious negotiations and efforts by Democrats and Republicans to create a criminal justice system that is more fair, more evenhanded, more proportionate, and is smarter about how we reduce crime. And I've really been impressed by the dedication of a core group of Democrats and Republicans—some of them, the most liberal Democrats and the most conservative Republicans—coming together saying this is the right thing to do.

We've got a good bill in the Senate that passed with bipartisan support out of committee. My hope is, is that gets to the floor and that we can pair it up with a good bill out of the House. And this is an area where you potentially can see us save money, reduce recidivism, make sure that people who make a mistake on nonviolent crimes have to pay the price, have to serve time, but are released in a reasonable fashion, that they have more support so that they're less likely to go back into the criminal system subsequently. And that's an area where I think we may be able to make a big difference.

So those are just two examples. We'll keep on looking for a number of examples like that. And wherever there's an opportunity, I'm going to take it. Okay.

Philip Crowther. Philip Crowther [France 24].

2016 Presidential Election/Paris Agreement on Climate Change/Republican Party's View of Climate Change/U.S. Leadership

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You mentioned climate change already. And at the time of the signing of the deal in Paris, you said it was potentially a turning point for the world. But this was a deal that was—that is not a legally binding document. And you bypassed Congress pretty much completely. Are you worried at this point that a Republican President who might take over from you in the White House could stop the deal in its tracks entirely? And considering that possibility, are you more interested in campaigning for a Democratic nominee, considering that danger?

The President. I think it's fair, I was going to be campaigning for a Democratic nominee—[*laughter*]—even without that danger. And I am very confident that we're going to have a terrific Democratic nominee and——

[*At this point, a cell phone rang.*]

The President. Whose phone is that, guys? Come on, now. [*Laughter*] Somebody—you recognize your ring. Don't be embarrassed. Just turn it off. [*Laughter*] There you go. Okay. Can I still hear it? All right, I think it's off now.

I think we will have a strong Democratic nominee. I think that Democratic nominee will win. I think I will have a Democratic successor. And I will campaign very hard to make that happen, for a whole variety of reasons, because they're far more likely to share my fundamental vision about where America should go.

But having said that, what I think people should also feel good about is that the agreement struck in Paris, although not legally binding when it comes to the targets that had been set, does create this architecture in which all around the world, countries are saying, this is where we're going. We're going to be chasing after this clean energy future. This is how we're going to meet our goals. We're going to double down on solar power. We're going to double down on wind power. We're going to invest more heavily in biofuels. We're going to figure out battery technologies.

And what you saw in this budget, which I think was really significant, was an extension of the solar tax credits and wind tax credits that we had helped to really boost early on in my administration and that had resulted in wind power increasing threefold, solar power increasing by twentyfold.

Those tax credits are now going to be extended for 5 to 7 years. And as a consequence, that combination of market signals means that the private sector is going to start investing much more heavily. They know this is coming. And it's not just coming here, it's coming around the world. So you now have a global marketplace for clean energy that is stable and accelerating over the course of the next decade.

That then creates a different dynamic that is independent of what Congress does, but also helps to shape what Congress does. Because the more people that are now getting jobs in solar installation and production, the more that you have companies who are seeing how American innovation can sell products in clean energy all across the Asia-Pacific and in Europe and in Africa, suddenly, there's a big monetary incentive to getting this right.

And that's been the history of environmental progress in this country, and now we've exported it around the world. Every time we've made a decision, "You know what, we're going to have clean air," the predictions were, everything would fall apart. And lo and behold, it turns out that American innovation makes getting clean air a lot less expensive than people expected and it happens a lot faster than expected.

When we made a decision that we were going to double fuel efficiency standards on cars, everybody said, oh, this is going to ruin the American auto industry. The American auto industry has been booming over the last couple years. Acid rain: When George H.W. Bush instituted a system to charge for the emissions that were causing acid rain, everybody said, well, you can't do that, that's going to ruin business. And it turned out it was smoother, faster, quicker, better. And acid rain—folks who were born—I don't know, some of you reporters are getting younger, or I'm getting older—may not remember it, but that was a big deal. Now most folks don't even remember it anymore, because it got solved. And there's no reason why the same won't happen here.

Now, do I think that there's going to be a lot of noise and campaigning next year about how we're going to stop Paris in its tracks? There will probably be a lot of noise like that. Do I actually think that, 2 years from now, 3 years from now, even Republican Members of Congress are going to look at it and say, that's a smart thing to do? I don't think they will.

Keep in mind that right now the American Republican Party is the only major party that I can think of in the advanced world that effectively denies climate change. I mean, it's an outlier. That—many of the key signatories to this deal, the architects of this deal, come from center-right governments. Even the far-right parties in many of these countries, now they may not like immigrants, for example, but they

admit, yes, the science tells us we've got to do something about climate change.

So I—my sense is, is that this is something that may be an advantage in terms of short-term politics in a Republican primary. It's not something that is going to be a winner for Republicans long term.

Q. You mentioned American leadership. Is it embarrassing to you that the other party denies climate change—[*inaudible*]—the world?

The President. No, it's—because, first of all, I'm not a member of that party. [*Laughter*] Second of all, it didn't stop us from being the key leader in getting this done.

I mean, this is something I've been working on now for 5, 6 years. When I went to Copenhagen, I essentially engaged in 24 hours of diplomacy to salvage from a pretty chaotic process the basic principle that all countries had to participate, that it—we couldn't have a rigid division between developed countries and developing countries when it came to solving this problem. That was the initial foundation for us then working with other countries, culminating in the joint announcement with China, bringing in India, bringing in Brazil and the other big, emerging countries, working with the Europeans, and getting this done.

This would not have happened without American leadership. And by the way, the same is true for the Iran nuclear deal. The same is true for the Trans-Pacific Partnership. The same is true for stamping out Ebola, something, you guys may recall from last year, which was the potential end of the world.

At each juncture, what we've said is, is that American strength and American exceptionalism is not just a matter of us bombing somebody. More often, it's a matter of us convening, setting the agenda, pointing other nations in a direction that's good for everybody and good for U.S. interests, engaging in painstaking diplomacy, leading by example. And sometimes, the results don't come overnight, they don't come the following day, but they come.

And this year, what you really saw was that steady, persistent leadership on a—on many initiatives that I began when I first came into office.

All right. I've got April Ryan [American Urban Radio Network].

Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/Syria/Criminal Justice Reform

Q. Mr. President, I want to ask you something on criminal justice, or that something you said also—something on—from Julie Pace. Your administration contends the United States is 5 percent of the world population, but 25 percent of the global jailed population. What legislation are you supporting that significantly cuts mass incarceration in this country? And then, going back to the Asad issue, does Asad have to go to defeat ISIS?

The President. Well, we're going to defeat ISIS, and we're going to do so by systematically squeezing them, cutting off their supply lines, cutting off their financing, taking out their leadership, taking out their forces, taking out their infrastructure. We're going to do so in partnership with forces on the ground that sometimes are spotty, sometimes need capacity-building, need our assistance, need our training, but we're seeing, steadily, progress in many of these areas. And so they're going to be on the run.

Now, they are going to continue to be dangerous. So let me just be very clear, because whenever I say that we have made progress in squeezing the territory that they control or made real inroads against them, what people will say is, well, if something happens around the world, then obviously that must not be true. But in any battle, in any fight, even as you make progress, there are still dangers involved. And ISIL's capacity both to infiltrate Western countries with people who've traveled to Syria or traveled to Iraq and the savviness of their social media, their ability to recruit disaffected individuals who may be French or British or even U.S. citizens, will continue to make them dangerous for quite some time. But we——

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. ——will systematically go after them.

Now, in order for us to stamp them out thoroughly, we have to eliminate lawless areas in which they cannot still roam. So we can disable

them, we can dismantle much of their infrastructure, greatly reduce the threat that they pose to the United States, our allies, and our neighbors. But in the same way that Al Qaida is pinned down and has much more difficulty carrying out any significant attacks because of how we've systematically dismantled them, they still pose a threat. There are still operatives who are interested in carrying out terrorist attacks, because they still operate in areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan, or more prominently right now, in Yemen, that are hard to reach.

Our long-term goal has to be able to stabilize these areas so that they don't have any safe haven. And in order for us to do that in Syria, there has to be an end to the civil war, and there has to be an actual government that has a police capacity and a structure in these areas that currently aren't governed. And it is my firm belief and the belief of the experts in this administration, that so long as Asad is there, we cannot achieve that kind of stability inside of Syria. And I think the history over the last several years indicates as much.

So that's going to continue to be a top priority for us: moving aggressively on the military track and not letting ISIL take a breath and pounding away at them with our special forces and our airstrikes and the training and advising of partners who can go after them. But we also have to keep very aggressive on this diplomatic track in order for us to bring countries together.

All right?

Q. On criminal justice——

The President. Everybody——

Q. Criminal justice concerns.

The President. Oh, on criminal justice reform, I answered the question. I'm hopeful——

Q. [*Inaudible*]—on the legislation, are you supporting that the—[*inaudible*]—mass incarceration?

The President. Right. And, April, what I said was, is that I strongly support the Senate legislation that's already been put forward. I'm hopeful that the House can come up with legislation that follows the same principles, which is to make sure that we're doing sentencing reform, but we're also doing a better job in terms of reducing recidivism and providing support for ex-offenders. And if we can get those two bills together in a conference, then I'm somewhat optimistic that we're going to be able to make a difference.

Now, keep in mind, April, when you use the term "mass incarceration," statistically, the overwhelming majority of people who are incarcerated are in State prisons and State facilities for State crimes. We can only focus on Federal law and Federal crimes. And so there's still going to be a large population of individuals who are incarcerated even for nonviolent drug crimes, because this is a trend that started in the late eighties and nineties and accelerated at the State levels.

But if we can show at the Federal level that we can be smart on crime, more cost-effective, more just, more proportionate, then we can set a trend for other States to follow as well. And that's our hope. This is not going to be something that's reversed overnight.

So, just to go back to my general principle, April, it took 20 years for us to get to the point we are now. And it will be 20 years, probably, before we verse—we reverse some of these major trends.

Okay, everybody, I've got to get to "Star Wars." Thank you. Thank you, guys. Appreciate you. Thank you. Merry Christmas, everybody.

Q. Happy New Year, Mr. President.

The President. Happy New Year to you!

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 2:06 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik, suspected perpetrators of the terrorist attack at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, CA, on December 2; former President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; and President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia. He also referred S. 1177, the Every Student Succeeds Act, which was approved December 10 and assigned Public Law No. 114–95; H.R. 22, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, which was approved December 4 and assigned Public Law No. 114–94; H.R. 2029, the

Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, which was approved December 18 and assigned Public Law No. 114–113; and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, also known as ISIS or Daesh.

Memorandum of Disapproval Concerning Legislation Regarding Congressional Disapproval of an Environmental Protection Agency Rule on Standards of Performance for Greenhouse Gas Emissions

December 18, 2015

S.J. Res. 23 is a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5 of the United States Code of a rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) relating to "Standards of Performance for Greenhouse Gas Emissions from New, Modified, and Reconstructed Stationary Sources: Electric Utility Generating Units." This resolution would nullify EPA's carbon pollution standards for new, modified, and reconstructed power plants. Accordingly, I am withholding my approval of this resolution. (The Pocket Veto Case, 279 U.S. 655 (1929)).

Climate change poses a profound threat to our future and future generations. Atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide, a primary greenhouse gas, are higher than they have been in at least 800,000 years. In 2009, EPA determined that greenhouse gas pollution endangers Americans' health and welfare by causing long-lasting changes in the climate that can have, and are already having, a range of negative effects on human health, the climate, and the environment. We are already seeing the impacts of climate change, and established science confirms that we will experience stronger storms, deeper droughts, longer wildfire seasons, and other intensified impacts as the planet warms. The Pentagon has determined that climate change poses immediate risks to our national security.

Power plants are the largest source of greenhouse gas pollution in our country. Although we have limits on other dangerous pollutants from power plants, the carbon pollution standards and the Clean Power Plan ensure that we will finally have national standards to reduce the amount of carbon pollution that our power plants can emit.

The carbon pollution standards will ensure that, when we make major investments in power generation infrastructure, we also deploy available technologies to make that infrastructure as low-emitting as possible. By blocking these standards from taking effect, S.J. Res. 23 would delay our transition to cleaner electricity generating technologies by enabling continued build-out of outdated, high-polluting infrastructure. Because it would overturn carbon pollution standards that are critical to protecting against climate change and ensuring the health and well-being of our Nation, I cannot support the resolution.

To leave no doubt that the resolution is being vetoed, in addition to withholding my signature, I am returning S.J. Res. 23 to the Secretary of the Senate, along with this Memorandum of Disapproval.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
December 18, 2015.

Memorandum of Disapproval Concerning Legislation Regarding Congressional Disapproval of an Environmental Protection Agency Rule on Carbon Pollution Emission Guidelines

December 18, 2015

S.J. Res. 24 is a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5 of the United States Code of a rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) relating to "Carbon Pollution Emission Guidelines for Existing Stationary Sources: Electric Utility Generating Units." This resolution would nullify the Clean Power Plan, the first national standards to address climate-destabilizing greenhouse gas pollution from existing power plants. Accordingly, I am withholding my approval of this resolution. (The Pocket Veto Case, 279 U.S. 655 (1929)).

Climate change poses a profound threat to our future and future generations. Atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide, a primary greenhouse gas, are higher than they have been in at least 800,000 years. In 2009, EPA determined that greenhouse gas pollution endangers Americans' health and welfare by causing long-lasting changes in the climate that can have, and are already having, a range of negative effects on human health, the climate, and the environment. We are already seeing the impacts of climate change, and established science confirms that we will experience stronger storms, deeper droughts, longer wildfire seasons, and other intensified impacts as the planet warms. The Pentagon has determined that climate change poses immediate risks to our national security.

The Clean Power Plan is a tremendously important step in the fight against global climate change. It is projected to reduce carbon pollution from power plants by 32 percent from 2005 levels by 2030. It builds on progress States and the power sector are already making to move toward cleaner energy production, and gives States the time and flexibility they need to develop tailored, cost-effective plans to reduce their emissions. By nullifying the Clean Power Plan, S.J. Res. 24 not only threatens ongoing progress toward cleaner energy, but would also eliminate public health and other benefits of up to $54 billion per year by 2030, including thousands fewer premature deaths from air pollution and thousands fewer childhood asthma attacks each year.

The Clean Power Plan is essential in addressing the largest source of greenhouse gas pollution in our country. It is past time to act to mitigate climate impacts on American communities. Because the resolution would overturn the Clean Power Plan, which is critical to protecting against climate change and ensuring the health and well-being of our Nation, I cannot support it.

To leave no doubt that the resolution is being vetoed, in addition to withholding my signature, I am returning S.J. Res. 24 to the Secretary of the Senate, along with this Memorandum of Disapproval.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
December 18, 2015.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Designating Funds for Overseas Contingency Operations and Global Counterterrorism

December 18, 2015

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Mr. President:)

In accordance with section 6 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (the "Act"), I hereby designate for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism all funding (including the rescission of funds) and contributions from foreign governments so designated

by the Congress in the Act pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, as outlined in the enclosed list of accounts.

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed memorandum from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Paul D. Ryan, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Designating Emergency Funding for the International Monetary Fund
December 18, 2015

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In accordance with language in Title IX of Division K of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (the "Act"), I hereby designate as emergency requirements all funding so designated by the Congress in the Act pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, for the following accounts: "International Monetary Programs—United States Quota, International Monetary Fund—Direct Loan Program Account," and "Loans to the International Monetary Fund—Direct Loan Program Account."

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed memorandum from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Paul D. Ryan, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Families of the Victims of the Terrorist Attack in San Bernardino, California
December 18, 2015

Hello, everybody. I just had a chance to meet with the families of the majority of the victims of the San Bernardino tragedy. It was so moving for Michelle and myself in part because it was so representative of the country. You had people from every background, every faith. Some described their loved ones who had come to this country as immigrants, others who had lived in the area all their lives, all of them extraordinarily proud of the work they were doing to keep people healthy and safe here in this community.

And as difficult as this time is for them and for this entire community, they're also representative of the strength and the unity and the love that exists in this community and in this country. And as we go into the holiday season, even as we are vigilant about preventing terrorist attacks from happening, even as we insist that we can't accept the notion of mass shootings in public places and of places of work and worship, we have to remind ourselves of the overwhelming good that exists out there.

And if you met some of these folks, despite the pain and the heartache that they're feeling, they could not have been more inspiring and more proud of their loved ones and more insistent that something good comes out of this tragedy. And many of them are already taking initiatives to reach out, to speak out on behalf of community and tolerance and treating people with respect. Many were interested in how we can prevent shootings like this from happening in the future.

It was a reminder of what's good in this country. And I hope that's something that gives all Americans a sense of pride and a sense of hope as we go into our celebrations of our faith and our families and our country. All right?

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:53 p.m. in a classroom at Indian Springs High School.

The President's Weekly Address
December 19, 2015

Hi, everybody. It's the most wonderful time of the year, not just for spreading holiday cheer, but also for list makers. You've got wish lists, Santa's lists, and of course, a blizzard of year-in-review lists. So I decided to get in on the action.

As a nation, we face big challenges. But in the spirit of 2015 retiree David Letterman, here—in no particular order—are my top 10 things that happened in 2015 that should make every American optimistic about 2016.

Number ten: the economy. Over the past 12 months, our businesses have created 2.5 million new jobs. In all, they've added 13.7 million new jobs over a 69-month streak of job growth. And the unemployment rate has fallen to 5 percent, the lowest it's been in almost 8 years.

Number nine: More Americans are getting health coverage. The rate of uninsured in America dropped below 10 percent for the first time ever. In all, 17.6 million people and climbing have gained coverage as the Affordable Care Act has taken effect. And don't forget, you can still sign up through January 31 at healthcare.gov.

Number eight: America's global leadership on climate change. Last week, in Paris, nearly 200 countries came together to set the course for a low-carbon future. And it was only possible because America led with clean energy here at home and strong diplomacy around the world.

Number seven: progress in the Americas. We turned the page on an outdated, half-century old policy by reestablishing diplomatic relations with Cuba and reopening Embassies in both our countries, allowing us to build greater ties between Americans and Cubans.

Number six: preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. We succeeded in forging a strong deal to stop Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. In fact, Iran has already dismantled thousands of centrifuges that enrich uranium.

Number five: standing strong against terrorism. Even as we continue to grieve over the attack in San Bernardino, we are leading a global coalition and hitting ISIL harder than ever. In Syria and Iraq, ISIL is losing territory, and we're not going to stop until we destroy this terrorist organization.

Number four: a 21st-century trade deal that makes sure our businesses can sell goods made in America across the Asia-Pacific. The Trans-Pacific Partnership is the strongest, most proworker, proenvironment trade agreement in our history. And it means that America—not China, not anyone else—will write the rules of the global economy for the century ahead.

Number three: a pair of Christmas miracles in Washington. This week, Congress passed a bipartisan budget that invests in middle class priorities, keeps our military the strongest in the world, and takes the threat of shutdowns and manufactured crises off the table for 2016. Plus, I signed a bipartisan education bill into law to help our students graduate prepared for college and their future careers.

Number two: Love won. No matter who you are, here in America, you're free to marry the person you love, because the freedom to marry is now the law in all 50 States.

And the number-one reason I'm optimistic going into 2016: It's you, the American people. All of this progress is because of you: because of workers rolling up their sleeves and getting the job done and entrepreneurs starting new businesses; because of teachers and health

workers and parents, all of us taking care of each other; because of our incredible men and women in uniform, serving to protect us all; because when we're united as Americans, there's nothing that we cannot do.

That's why it's has been a good year. And it's why I'm confident we'll keep achieving big things in the new year. So happy holidays, everybody.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:25 p.m. on December 17 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on December 19. In the address, the President referred to David M. Letterman, former host, CBS's "Late Show With David Letterman." He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization; H.R. 2029, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, which was approved December 18 and assigned Public Law No. 114–113; and S. 1177, the Every Student Succeeds Act, which was approved December 10 and assigned Public Law No. 114–95. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 18, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 19.

Statement on the Persecution of Christians
December 23, 2015

During this season of Advent, Christians in the United States and around the world are preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. At this time, those of us fortunate enough to live in countries that honor the birthright of all people to practice their faith freely give thanks for that blessing. Michelle and I are also ever-mindful that many of our fellow Christians do not enjoy that right and hold especially close to our hearts and minds those who have been driven from their ancient homelands by unspeakable violence and persecution.

In some areas of the Middle East where church bells have rung for centuries on Christmas Day, this year they will be silent; this silence bears tragic witness to the brutal atrocities committed against these communities by ISIL.

We join with people around the world in praying for God's protection for persecuted Christians and those of other faiths, as well as for those brave men and women engaged in our military, diplomatic, and humanitarian efforts to alleviate their suffering and restore stability, security, and hope to their nations. As the old Christmas carol reminds us:

> The Wrong shall fail,
> The Right prevail,
> With peace on earth, good-will to men.

NOTE: The statement referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

The President's Weekly Address
December 25, 2015

The President. Merry Christmas, everybody! This is one of our favorite times of year in the Obama household, filled with family and friends, warmth and good cheer. That's even true when I spend all night chasing Bo and Sunny away from the cookies we leave for Santa.

It's also my favorite weekly address of the year, because I'm joined by a special holiday guest star: Mrs. Obama.

The First Lady. Merry Christmas, everyone. Here at the White House, we've spent the past month helping everyone get into the holiday spirit.

Our theme this year is "A Timeless Tradition," and the decorations in each room reflect some of our country's most cherished pastimes, from saluting our troops and their families to helping children dream big dreams for their future. And we've invited thousands of families here to the White House to enjoy the festivities, because there's no holiday tradition more timeless than opening our doors to others.

The President. Today, like millions of Americans and Christians around the world, our family celebrates the birth of Jesus and the values He lived in his own life: treating one another with love and compassion; caring for those on society's margins—the sick and the hungry, the poor and the persecuted, the stranger in need of shelter or simply an act of kindness. That's the spirit that binds us together, not just as Christians, but as Americans of all faiths. It's what the holidays are about: coming together as one American family to celebrate our blessings and the values we hold dear.

During this season, we also honor all those who defend those values in our country's uniform. Every day, the brave men and women of our military serve to keep us safe, and so do their families.

The First Lady. So, as we sing carols and open presents, as we win snowball fights——

The President. Or lose snowball fights——

The First Lady. ——let's also take time to pay tribute to those who've given our country so much. Go to joiningforces.gov to see how you can serve the troops, veterans, and military families in your community. And together, we can show them just how grateful we are for their sacrifice. That's a tradition that we all can embrace, today and every day.

The President. So, on behalf of Malia, Sasha, Bo, Sunny, Grandma, and everyone here at the White House, merry Christmas. May God bless our troops and their families, and may God bless you all with peace and joy in the year ahead.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:30 p.m. on December 17 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on December 25. In the address, the President referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 24, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 25.

Remarks at Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe, Hawaii
December 25, 2015

The President. Hello, everybody! Merry Christmas! *Mele Kalikimaka!* Happy New Year! Happy Hanukkah! We just want to—hope you guys are having a great holiday. And it is wonderful to see all of you.

This is one of our favorite things to do every single year, because not only are we in Hawaii for Christmas——

Audience members. Yes!

The President. ——but we're also able to say thank you on behalf of the American people. So many families here are serving tirelessly. And it's not just those in uniform who serve, it's also the spouses, the kids. There are times where you're missing birthdays, missing soccer games, making sacrifices.

As we know, when you're deployed overseas, it's tough. And even though we've been able to reduce the number of folks who are deployed in places like Iraq and Afghanistan, there are still folks over there every single day. And it's still dangerous, as we saw this past week; we had some outstanding, brave men and women who were killed.

And so we never take for granted what all of you do for the American people. You help keep us free. You help keep us strong. And whatever service you're in, whatever branch, we are extraordinarily grateful for everything that you do every single day. And we hope you guys had a wonderful Christmas.

For those of you who are with your families, that is a true blessing. For those of you who are still a little bit far away from home, we hope you had a chance to give them our best and let them know that we love them as well. Michelle and I are looking forward to taking pictures with all of you. And we see a couple of new babies this time. [*Laughter*] We always get our baby fix and—[*laughter*]—when we take these photos.

But the main thing I just want to say is keep up the extraordinary work. To Colonel Killeen and the rest of the commanding officers here, thank you for doing such an extraordinary job. And thank you for welcoming us as well. The only problem I've got when I'm here is having to work out with marines in the gym. [*Laughter*] Because I generally feel like your Commander in Chief is in pretty good shape, and then I get next to some guy curling a hundred pounds, and it makes me feel small. [*Laughter*] But that's okay. It gives me some inspiration. I'm going to work harder so I can keep up with you next year, all right?

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. Merry Christmas. Happy New Year.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:32 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Adrianna M. Vorderbruggen, T. Sgt. Joseph G. Lemm, S. Sgt. Louis M. Bonacasa, S. Sgt. Michael A. Cinco, S. Sgt. Chester J. McBride, and S. Sgt. Peter W. Taub, U.S. Air Force personnel who were killed in a terrorist attack near Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, on December 21; and Col. Sean C. Killeen, USMC, commanding officer, Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

Statement on the Observance of Kwanzaa
December 26, 2015

Michelle and I extend our warmest wishes to families across the country celebrating Kwanzaa this holiday season. Today begins a weeklong celebration of African American heritage and culture through family and community festivities. Kwanzaa's seven principles—unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith—are also shared values that bind us as Americans. And in the spirit of the season, we reflect on the blessings of the past year and commit to building a brighter future for all our children. As families, friends, and neighbors come together today to light the kinara, our family sends our best wishes for a happy and healthy new year.

NOTE: This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary as a statement by the President and the First Lady.

Appendix A—Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this book.

July 1

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Nashville, TN, accompanied by Medina, OH, resident and health care reform advocate Natoma A. Canfield. En route to Taylor Stratton Elementary School in Nashville, he stopped by the residence of Kelly Bryant, who had written him a letter on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, to pick her up for the event, where she later introduced him. Later, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Matteo Renzi of Italy to discuss the economic situation in Greece and the need for structural reforms. He also participated in a Twitter question-and-answer session on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the U.S. National Day at Expo 2015 Milan in Milan, Italy, on July 4:

Thomas J. Vilsack (head of delegation);
John R. Phillips;
Betty McCollum;
Douglas T. Hickey;
Eric Goldstein;
Samuel Kass;
Marianne Smith Edge;
Angela Tagtow; and
Susan Ungaro.

July 2

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, the President traveled to La Crosse, WI.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the 2015 Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) Women's World Cup final game in Vancouver, Canada, on July 5:

Jill T. Biden (head of delegation);
Joseph R. Biden, Jr.;
Bruce Heyman;
Evan Ryan;
Cobi Jones; and
Mia Hamm.

July 3

In the afternoon, the President traveled to the Columbia Country Club in Chevy Chase, MD. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Communist Party General Secretary Nguyen Phú Trong of Vietnam to the White House on July 7.

July 4

The White House announced that the South Lawn Independence Day barbecue for military servicemembers and their families had been canceled due to weather conditions.

In the evening, on the South Lawn, the President and Mrs. Obama hosted an Independence Day celebration for White House staff, guests, and military servicemembers and their families.

July 6

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with President François Hollande of France to discuss the economic unrest in Greece and the need for reforms

combined with growth and debt sustainability within the eurozone.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with the U.S. women's soccer team to congratulate them on winning the World Cup, applaud Coach Jill Ellis for her leadership, and commend Carli Lloyd's outstanding performance in the championship game.

July 7

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Chancellor Angela Merkel to discuss the economic unrest in Greece and the need for reforms combined with growth and debt sustainability within the eurozone. Later, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Also in the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Alexios Tsipras of Greece to discuss the Prime Minister's ideas for a path forward between Greece and its creditors and the need for a mutually acceptable agreement.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter.

In the evening, in the State Dining Room, the President met with members of the Senate Democratic Caucus.

The President announced his intention to nominate Brad R. Carson to be Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness at the Department of Defense.

The President announced his intention to nominate Peter W. Bodde to be Ambassador to Libya.

The President announced his intention to nominate Catherine Ebert-Gray to be Ambassador to Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.

The President announced his intention to nominate Dennis B. Hankins to be Ambassador to Guinea.

The President announced his intention to nominate Elisabeth I. Millard to be Ambassador to Tajikistan.

The President declared a major disaster in Wyoming and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms and flooding from May 24 through June 6.

July 8

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Oval Office, they met with Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew. Also in the afternoon, in the Situation Room, he and his national security team had a secure video conference with Secretary of State John F. Kerry, Secretary of Energy Ernest J. Moniz, and members of the U.S. negotiating team in Vienna to discuss the progress of international diplomatic efforts to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

The White House announced that the President will host and deliver remarks at the White House Conference on Aging on July 13.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina on July 11:

William J. Clinton (head of delegation);
Maureen E. Cormack;
Roger F. Wicker;
C. Jeanne Shaheen;
Eliot L. Engel;
Peter T. King;
Madeleine K. Albright;
Rosemary A. DiCarlo;
Victoria Nuland; and
Stephen J. Rapp.

July 9

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Biden met with Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mary K. Wakefield to be Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services.

The President announced his intention to nominate Anthony R. Coscia to be a Director on the AMTRAK Board of Directors.

The President announced his intention to nominate Matthew R. Jeppson to be Director of the Mint at the Department of the Treasury.

The President announced his intention to nominate Andrew M. Slavitt to be Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services at the Department of Health and Human Services.

The President announced his intention to nominate Derek Tai-Ching Kan to be a Director on the AMTRAK Board of Directors.

The President announced the nomination of Darlene M. Soltys to be a judge on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

July 10

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Philadelphia, PA, on July 14.

July 11

In the morning, the President traveled to the Caves Valley Golf Club in Owings Mills, MD, arriving in the afternoon.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

July 13

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President signed 46 commutations of the prison sentences of nonviolent drug offenders and released a video of the signing to publicize efforts to reform the U.S. criminal justice system. Later, in the Private Dining Room, he and Vice President Biden had lunch.

During the day, in the Oval Office, the President met with White House Chief of Staff Denis R. McDonough, Senior Director for Iran, Iraq, Syria, and the Gulf States Jeffrey Prescott, National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice, Deputy National Security Adviser for Counterterrorism Avril D. Haines, and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes to discuss the multilateral agreement reached in Vienna, Austria, to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. Then, he had a telephone conversation with Secretary of State John F. Kerry to thank him for his role in negotiating the agreement between the P5-plus-1 and Iran to ensure the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program.

Also during the day, the President dropped by a meeting between Vice President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk of Ukraine.

In the evening, the President had separate telephone conversations with various Members of Congress to discuss the Iran nuclear agreement reached in Vienna. Also in the evening, he had a telephone conversation with former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton to discuss the Iran nuclear agreement.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Durant, OK, and Oklahoma City, OK, on July 15 and 16.

The President declared a major disaster in Louisiana and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms and flooding from May 18 through June 20.

July 14

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Cabinet Room, the President recorded an interview with Thomas L. Friedman of the New York Times for later broadcast online. Later, he traveled to Philadelphia, PA. While en route to the Philadelphia Convention Center, he had a telephone conversation with King Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia to discuss the agreement among the P5-plus-1, the European Union, and Iran on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action regarding Iran's nuclear program, security assurances discussed with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members at Camp David, MD, in May, and the situation in Yemen. Then, at the Convention Center, he met with formerly incarcerated individuals to

discuss reintegration following their release and work they are doing to help other formerly incarcerated individuals and at-risk youth through community service, mentorship, and education.

Later in the afternoon, at the Rittenhouse hotel, the President attended a Democratic National Committee roundtable fundraiser.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

During the day, the President had separate telephone conversations with President François Hollande of France, Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom, and European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini to discuss the agreement among the P5-plus-1, the European Union, and Iran on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) regarding Iran's nuclear program, thank the leaders for their important role in achieving the agreement, and reaffirm close coordination as the JCPOA is implemented. The President also welcomed the July 13 agreement between Greece and its creditors and urged a path toward growth and debt stability in Greece through continued economic reforms.

Also during the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel to discuss the Iran nuclear agreement and underscore the strong U.S. commitment to Israel's security. He also had a telephone conversation with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan of Abu Dhabi, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of the United Arab Emirates to discuss the Iran nuclear agreement, security assurances discussed with Gulf Cooperation Council members, and the situation in Yemen.

July 15

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Denison, TX. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia to discuss the agreement among the P5-plus-1, the European Union, and Iran on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action regarding Iran's nuclear program, thank President Putin for his important role in achieving the agreement, and review the situation in Syria. Upon arrival in Denison, TX, he traveled to Durant, OK, where, at Durant High School, he met with youth from the Choctaw, Cherokee, Muscogee (Creek), and Chickasaw Nations.

During the day, outside the West Wing, the President met with Vice President Joe Biden, Secretary of State John F. Kerry, National Security Adviser to the Vice President Colin Kahl, and National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice.

In the evening, the President traveled to Denison, TX. Then, he traveled to Oklahoma City, OK, where, at the Sheraton Oklahoma City Downtown Hotel, he remained overnight.

The President announced his intention to nominate Susan Coppedge to be Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking, with the rank of Ambassador at Large, at the Department of State.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jessie Hill Roberson to be a Commissioner of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Marc J. Sievers to be Ambassador to Oman.

The President announced his intention to nominate Kenneth D. Ward for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as U.S. Representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons at the Department of State.

The President announced his intention to appoint Elizabeth C. Wesman as Chair of Presidential Emergency Board No. 248.

The President announced his intention to appoint Barbara Deinhardt and Ann Kenis as members of Presidential Emergency Board No. 248.

The President announced his intention to appoint Regina T. Jefferson as a member of the Advisory Committee to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

July 16

In the morning, the President traveled to El Reno, OK, where, at the Federal Correctional Institution El Reno, he had a roundtable discussion with Jesus Chavez, Tyrone Ramsey, Arnell Stewart, Timothy Jordan, and other inmates and toured the prison facility's Cell Block B with Federal Bureau of Prisons Director Charles E. Samuels, Jr., and correctional officer Ronald Warlick. Then, also at the El Reno correctional facility, he recorded an interview with Shane Smith of VICE News for later broadcast.

Also in the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with former President George H.W. Bush to wish him a speedy recovery after injuries resulting from a fall at his home in Kennebunkport, ME, and extend best wishes on behalf of himself and Mrs. Obama.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

During the day, the President was briefed by Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James B. Comey, Jr., Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco, and members his national security team on the shootings at the U.S. military facilities in Chattanooga, TN.

The White House announced that the President will travel to New York City on July 17 and 18.

The President announced the nomination of Mark A. Young to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California.

The President declared a major disaster in Colorado and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms, tornadoes, flooding, landslides, and mudslides from May 4 through June 16.

July 17

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President met with Minister of Foreign Affairs Adil al-Ahmad al-Jubayr of Saudi Arabia.

In the afternoon, the President and his daughter Sasha traveled to New York City, arriving in the evening.

In the evening, the President traveled to a private residence, where he attended a Democratic National Committee roundtable fundraiser. Later, he and his daughter Sasha traveled to the Hilton Manhattan East hotel, where they remained overnight.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Pittsburgh, PA, on July 21.

The White House announced that the President will travel to New York City on July 21.

July 18

In the morning, the President and his daughters Malia and Sasha visited Central Park, where, joined by the President's sister Maya Soetoro-Ng and her husband Konrad Ng, they took a short walk through the park.

In the afternoon, at the Richard Rodgers Theatre, the President, his daughters Malia and Sasha, and his sister Maya and brother-in-law Konrad attended a performance of the Broadway musical "Hamilton."

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

July 20

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the East Room, the President dropped by a meeting of the American Legion's Boys Nation, where he greeted delegates and staff members.

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with President Xi Jinping of China to express his appreciation for the role China played in the nuclear deal achieved among the P5-plus-1, the European Union, and Iran, and discuss China-U.S. relations ahead of President Xi's visit to the White House in September.

The President announced his intention to nominate Kathryn M. Dominguez to be a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

The President declared a major disaster in Kansas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery effort in the

area affected by severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds, and flooding from May 4 through June 21.

July 21

In the morning, the President traveled to Pittsburgh, PA.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to New York City, where, at the Daily Show Studios, he recorded an interview with Jon Stewart of Comedy Central's "The Daily Show With Jon Stewart" for later broadcast.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced the nomination of Leonard T. Strand to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Iowa.

July 22

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Situation Room, he had a video teleconference with President Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah of Afghanistan to commend them for the progress made in curbing corruption and improving the economy and discuss ways to strengthen the Afghan national security forces and encourage regional counterterrorism cooperation.

In the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey to discuss strengthening cooperation in the fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, review efforts to bring security and stability to the Middle East, and condemn the July 20 and July 22 terrorist attacks in Suruc and Ceylanpinar, Turkey.

The President declared a major disaster in New Jersey and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by a severe storm on June 23.

July 23

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President recorded an interview with Jon Sopel of BBC News for later broadcast.

In the evening, the President traveled to Ramstein Air Base, Germany, arriving the following morning. While en route aboard Air Force One, he was briefed by Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco on the shooting at the Grand Theatre 16 in Lafayette, Louisiana.

The President announced his intention to nominate Richard C. Howorth to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The President announced his intention to nominate Harry K. Thomas, Jr., to be Ambassador to Zimbabwe.

The President announced his intention to nominate Victoria M. Baecher Wassmer to be Under Secretary for Management and Performance at the Department of Energy.

The President announced his intention to appoint Sandra E. Black as a member of the Council of Economic Advisers.

The President announced his intention to appoint Raymond Cook as Chief Information Officer of the Intelligence Community at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

The President announced his intention to appoint Brooke D. Anderson and Robert L. Stein as members of the President's Intelligence Advisory Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Barbara K. Rimer as Chair and Owen N. Witte as a member of the President's Cancer Panel.

July 24

In the morning, the President traveled to Nairobi, Kenya, arriving in the evening. Upon arrival, he traveled to the Villa Rosa Kempinski hotel, where he had dinner with his sister Auma Obama, grandmother Sarah Onyango Obama, and other Kenyan relatives. He remained overnight at the Villa Rosa Kempinski hotel.

The President announced the designation the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the opening ceremony of the 2015 Special Olympics World Games in Los Angeles, CA, on July 25:

Michelle Obama (head of delegation);
Maxine M. Waters;

Adam B. Schiff;
Janice Hahn; and
Alan Lowenthal.

July 25

In the morning, at the United Nations Compound in Nairobi, Kenya, the President toured the Power Africa Innovation Fair with U.S. Agency for International Development Acting Administrator Alfonso E. Lenhardt and Power Africa Coordinator Andrew M. Herscowitz. During the tour, he met with fair participants Sam Goldman, cofounder and chief customer officer, d.light; Katherine Lucey, founder and chief executive officer, Solar Sister; June Muli, head of customer care, M-Kopa Solar; Michael Wanyonyi, founder and chief executive officer, Mibawa Suppliers Ltd.; Amos Nguru, chief executive officer, Afrisol Energy Ltd.; and Charles Ogingo, cofounder and chairman, Pfoofy Power and Light Ltd.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to the U.S. Embassy, where he visited with Embassy personnel and their families. Then, he traveled to Memorial Park, where he met with survivors and family members of the victims of the 1998 Embassy bombing, signed the guest book, and participated in a wreath-laying ceremony honoring the victims. Later, at the State House, he participated in an arrival ceremony with President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya. Then, he traveled to the Villa Rosa Kempinski hotel.

In the evening, the President traveled to the State House. Later, he returned to the Villa Rosa Kempinski hotel, where he remained overnight.

July 26

In the morning, the President traveled to the Safaricom Indoor Arena in Nairobi, Kenya.

In the afternoon, at the Safaricom Indoor Arena, the President met with Kenyan opposition leaders Raila Amolo Odinga, leader of the Orange Democratic Movement party; Sen. Moses Masika Wetangula, leader of the Forum for Restoration of Democracy–Kenya party; Kalonzo Musyoka, leader of the Wiper Democratic Movement–Kenya party; and Martha Karua, leader of the National Rainbow Coalition–Kenya party. Later, he traveled to Kenyatta University in Nairobi, where, at the Young African Leaders Initiative Regional Leadership Center, he participated in a live radio interview with Olive Burrows of Capital FM in Nairobi. Later, he traveled to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

In the evening, upon arrival in Addis Ababa, the President traveled to the U.S. Embassy, where he visited with Embassy personnel and their families. Then, he traveled to the Sheraton Addis hotel, where he remained overnight.

July 27

In the morning, at the National Palace in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the President participated in an arrival ceremony with Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn of Ethiopia.

In the afternoon, at the National Palace, the President met with President Mulatu Teshome of Ethiopia. Later, he returned to the Sheraton Addis Hotel, where he met with Prime Minister Hailemariam, President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya, President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda, Minister of Foreign Affairs Ibrahim Ahmad 'Abd al-Aziz Ghandour of Sudan, and Chairperson Nkosazana Clarice Dlamini Zuma of the African Union Commission to discuss conflict resolution efforts in South Sudan, regional counterterrorism cooperation, and efforts to strengthen the Government of Somalia.

In the evening, the President traveled to the National Palace, where he viewed the fossil skeleton of the early human ancestor known as Lucy with Zeresenay "Zeray" Alemseged, senior curator of anthropology at the California Academy of Sciences, and Yonas Desta Tsegaye, director general of the National Museum of Ethiopia. The Australopithecus fossil was discovered in Ethiopia in 1974 and is permanently housed at the National Museum.

Later in the evening, the President returned to the Sheraton Addis hotel, where he remained overnight.

The White House announced that the President will welcome King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia of Spain to the White House on September 15.

July 28

In the morning, at the Sheraton Addis hotel, the President met with Ethiopian civil society activists.

In the afternoon, at African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa, the President met with Chairperson Nkosazana Clarice Dlamini Zuma of the African Union Commission. Later, he traveled to Ramstein Air Force Base, Germany, arriving in the evening.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

July 29

In the afternoon, in the East Room, the President hosted a working reception for House Democrats to discuss his legislative priorities, including the agreement among the P5-plus-1, the European Union, and Iran on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action regarding Iran's nuclear program. Vice President Joe Biden also attended.

During the day, in the Oval Office, the President met with Vice President Biden.

The President declared a major disaster in Vermont and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by a severe storm and flooding on June 9.

July 30

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had lunch.

During the day, in the East Room, the President greeted American Legion's Girls Nation delegates and posed for a group photograph.

In the evening, in the Oval Office, the President participated in a conference call with grassroots supporters to discuss the agreement among the P5-plus-1, the European Union, and Iran on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action regarding Iran's nuclear program.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert P. Jackson to be Ambassador to Ghana.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael H. Michaud to be Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training at the Department of Labor.

The President announced his intention to nominate John E. Sparks to be a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces.

The President announced his intention to nominate Eric D. Eberhard to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation.

The President announced the nomination of Elizabeth J. Drake, Jennifer Choe Groves, and Gary S. Katzmann to be judges on the U.S. Court of International Trade.

The President announced the nomination of Susan Paradise Baxter, Robert J. Colville, and Marilyn J. Horan to be judges on the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

The President announced the nomination of Inga S. Bernstein to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts.

The President announced the nomination of Gary R. Brown to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York.

The President announced the nomination of Dax E. López to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia.

The President announced the nomination of John M. Younge to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

The President declared a major disaster in South Dakota and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds, and flooding from June 17 through 24.

July 31

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

During the day, in the East Room, the President greeted recipients of the 2013 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching and posed for a group photograph.

The President declared a major disaster in Iowa and ordered Federal aid to supplement

State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds, and flooding from June 20 through 25.

August 1

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Camp David, MD.

August 2

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

August 3

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the evening, in the Oval Office, the President participated in a credentialing ceremony for newly appointed Ambassadors to the U.S.

The White House announced that the President will deliver remarks at American University on August 5.

August 4

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the State Dining Room and Red Room, he viewed projects on exhibit for the White House Demo Day. Later, in the Cabinet Room, he met with U.S. Jewish community leaders to discuss the agreement among the P5-plus-1, the European Union, and Iran on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action regarding Iran's nuclear program.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the 50th National Day celebration in Singapore on August 9: Ronald Kirk (head of delegation); and Kirk W.B. Wagar.

August 5

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President participated in a roundtable interview with foreign policy columnists to discuss the agreement among the P5-plus-1, the European Union, and Iran on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action regarding Iran's nuclear program.

The President announced his intention to nominate Richard O. Buckius to be Deputy Director of the National Science Foundation.

The President announced his intention to nominate T.F. Scott Darling III to be Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration at the Department of Transportation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Linda I. Etim to be Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Africa at the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The President announced his intention to nominate Laura S.H. Holgate to be U.S. Representative to the Vienna Office of the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador, and U.S. Representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency, with the rank of Ambassador.

The President announced his intention to nominate Marcel J. Lettre II to be Under Secretary for Intelligence at the Department of Defense.

The President announced his intention to nominate Patrick J. Murphy to be Under Secretary of the Army.

The President announced his intention to nominate Cherry A. Murray to be Director of the Office of Science at the Department of Energy.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert D. Reischauer to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Social Security trust funds.

The President announced his intention to nominate Charles P. Blahous III to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Social Security trust funds.

The President declared a major disaster in the Northern Mariana Islands and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area affected by Typhoon Soudelor from August 1 through 3.

August 6

In the afternoon, in the Map Room, the President recorded separate interviews with Fareed Zakaria of CNN's "Fareed Zakaria GPS" program and Jake Horowitz of Mic.com for later broadcast. Then, in the Cabinet Room, he recorded an interview with Steve Inskeep of NPR's "Morning Edition" program for later broadcast.

The White House announced that the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha will travel to Martha's Vineyard, MA, on August 7.

August 7

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Map Room, the President recorded an interview with Thomas L. Friedman of the New York Times for later broadcast online.

In the afternoon, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughter Sasha traveled to Chilmark, MA, arriving in the evening. Upon arrival, they traveled to their vacation residence, where they remained overnight.

The President declared a major disaster in Missouri and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds, and flooding from May 15 through July 27.

August 8

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Oak Bluffs, MA.

In the evening, the President returned to his vacation residence in Chilmark, MA, where he remained overnight.

The President declared a major disaster in West Virginia and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms, straight-line winds, flooding, landslides, and mudslides from July 10 through 14.

The President declared a major disaster for the Oglala Sioux Tribe of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and ordered Federal aid to supplement tribal recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms, straight-line winds, and flooding from May 8 through 29.

August 9

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to West Tisbury, MA. Later, they returned to their vacation residence in Chilmark, MA, where they remained overnight.

August 10

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Oak Bluffs, MA. Later, he returned to his vacation residence in Chilmark, MA, arriving in the evening, where he remained overnight.

August 12

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Oak Bluffs, MA. Later, he returned to his vacation residence Chilmark, MA.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to Edgartown, MA. Later, they returned to their vacation residence in Chilmark, where they remained overnight. He also had a telephone conversation with former President Jimmy Carter to extend his and Mrs. Obama's best wishes following President Carter's recent announcement of his cancer diagnosis.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Park Geun-hye of South Korea to the White House on October 16.

The President declared a major disaster in Kentucky and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds, flooding, landslides, and mudslides from July 11 through 20.

August 13

In the morning, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Oak Bluffs, MA. Later, they returned to their vacation residence in Chilmark, MA, where they remained overnight.

August 14

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Oak Bluffs, MA. Later, he returned to his vaca-

tion residence in Chilmark, MA, arriving in the evening, where they remained overnight.

August 15

In the morning, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Edgartown, MA. Later, they returned to their vacation residence in Chilmark. Then, he traveled to Oak Bluffs, MA.

In the afternoon, at the Farm Neck Golf Club, the President played a round of golf with former President William J. Clinton, former U.S. Trade Representative Ronald Kirk, and civil rights leader Vernon E. Jordan, Jr. Later, he returned to his vacation residence in Chilmark, MA.

In the evening, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Oak Bluffs, MA, where, at the Farm Neck Golf Club, they attended a birthday party for Mr. Jordan. Later, they returned to their vacation residence in Chilmark, where they remained overnight.

August 17

In the morning, the President traveled to Edgartown, MA.

In the afternoon, the President returned to his vacation residence in Chilmark, where he remained overnight.

August 18

In the morning, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Edgartown, MA.

In the afternoon, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha returned to their vacation residence in Chilmark, where they remained overnight.

August 19

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Oak Bluffs, MA. Later, he returned to his vacation residence in Chilmark.

In the evening, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters and Malia and Sasha traveled to Tisbury, MA. Later, they returned to their vacation residence in Chilmark, where they remained overnight. He was also briefed on the wildfires affecting Western States, including the deaths of three firefighters in Washington.

August 20

In the afternoon, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Aquinnah, MA, where they spent time at the beach with U.S. Ambassador to Japan Caroline B. Kennedy and her family. Later, they returned to their vacation residence in Chilmark, where they remained overnight.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Las Vegas, NV, on August 24.

August 21

In the morning, the President traveled to Oak Bluffs, MA.

In the afternoon, the President returned to his vacation residence in Chilmark.

In the evening, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Oak Bluffs, MA. Later, they returned to their vacation residence in Chilmark, where they remained overnight.

Also in the evening, the President was briefed on the shooting aboard a train traveling from Amsterdam to Paris, France, in which suspected gunman Ayoub El Khazzani was subdued and restrained by several passengers, including U.S. servicemembers Aleksander Skarlatos and Spencer Stone.

The White House announced that the President will welcome the 2014 Women's National Basketball Association Champion Phoenix Mercury to the White House on August 26.

The President declared an emergency in Washington and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts in the areas affected by wildfires beginning on August 13 and continuing.

August 22

In the morning, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Tisbury, MA.

In the afternoon, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha returned to their vacation residence in Chilmark, MA. He also had separate telephone conversations with A1C Spencer Stone, USAF,

National Guard Spc. Aleksander Skarlatos, USA, and U.S. student Anthony Sadler to commend and congratulate them on their courageous actions aboard a high-speed train traveling from Amsterdam to Paris, France, which forestalled an attempted mass shooting on August 21. He also wished Airman Stone a speedy recovery from injuries he sustained in restraining suspected gunman Ayoub El Khazzani.

During the day, the President was briefed on the security situation on the Korean Peninsula. He also had a telephone conversation with President François Hollande of France to discuss the August 21 attempted mass shooting on the Paris-bound train, the brave actions of the three U.S. citizens who helped to subdue the suspected gunman, and their joint commitment to combating terrorism.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to a private residence in Edgartown, MA. Later, they returned to their vacation residence in Chilmark, MA, where they remained overnight.

The White House announced that the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha will return to Washington, DC, on August 23.

August 23

In the morning, the President traveled to Oak Bluffs, MA.

In the afternoon, the President returned to his vacation residence in Chilmark, MA. Later, he, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

August 24

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, he traveled to Las Vegas, NV. Then, he traveled to Henderson, NV, arriving in the evening.

In the evening, the President traveled to the Westin Las Vegas Hotel, Casino, and Spa in Las Vegas, NV, where he remained overnight.

The President made additional disaster assistance available to the Northern Mariana Islands by authorizing an increase in the level of Federal funding for the Commonwealth as a result of Typhoon Soudelor from August 1 through 3.

August 25

In the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the afternoon.

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan to commend the Prime Minister for his August 14 expression of remorse for the suffering caused by Japan during the World War II era, encourage further reconciliation efforts, and reaffirm key areas of Japan-U.S. cooperation.

The White House announced that the President will travel to New Orleans, LA, on August 27.

August 26

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany to discuss the situation in eastern Ukraine, international diplomatic efforts to reduce violence and tensions in Eastern Europe, the migration crisis in Europe, in particular the plight of Syrian refugees entering Europe. Later, in the Diplomatic Reception Room, he recorded separate "Live From the White House" television interviews with Carolyn Clifford of WXYZ in Detroit, MI, Sally-Ann Roberts of WWL in New Orleans, LA, Monica Malpass of WPVI in Philadelphia, PA, Steve Raible of KIRO in Seattle, WA, and Maureen Bunyan of WJLA in Washington, DC, for later broadcast.

The President announced his intention to appoint Jay C. Shambaugh as a member of the Council of Economic Advisers.

The President announced his intention to appoint M. Tia Johnson as Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs at the Department of Homeland Security.

The President announced his intention to appoint Doreen E. Brown and Aaron Payment

as members of the National Advisory Council on Indian Education.

The President announced his intention to appoint Joan McDonald as a member of the National Infrastructure Advisory Council.

The President announced his intention to appoint Lisa Funderburke Hoffman as a member of the National Museum and Library Services Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Carmen A. Corrales as a member of the President's Commission on White House Fellowships.

August 27

In the morning, the President traveled to New Orleans, LA, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, the President participated in a walking tour of the Tremé neighborhood with Mayor Mitchell J. Landrieu of New Orleans and visited with local residents. Then, he traveled to Willie Mae's Scotch House restaurant, where he had lunch with Mayor Landrieu, Rep. Cedric L. Richmond, Cabinet Secretary Broderick D. Johnson, and Victor York-Carter, Garland Sipper, Caswick Naverro, and Denzel Shine, local youth and "My Brother's Keeper" initiative participants who have rebuilt their lives over the past 10 years since the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Later, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

The White House announced that the President will welcome King Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia to the White House on September 4.

August 28

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, the President participated in an interview with Jane Eisner, editor-in-chief of Forward.com.

In the afternoon, at the Fiola restaurant, the President attended a Democratic National Committee roundtable fundraiser.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Anchorage, AK, from August 31 through September 2.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Joachim Gauck of Germany to the White House on October 7.

The President announced his intention to appoint James O'Brien as Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs at the Department of State.

The President announced his intention to appoint Charles "Chip" Lyons as U.S. Representative to the Executive Board of the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The President announced his intention to appoint Aaron Williams as U.S. Alternate Representative to the Executive Board of the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The President announced his intention to appoint Esther Brimmer and Michael Guest as members of the National Security Education Board.

August 30

The White House announced that the President will travel to Dillingham and Kotzebue, AK, on September 2.

August 31

In the morning, the President traveled to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, AK, arriving in the afternoon. He was joined on the flight by Gov. William M. Walker of Alaska. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with Kathleen Goforth, wife of Harris County Deputy Sheriff Darren Goforth, who was killed at a gas station in Cypress, TX, on August 28, to offer condolences on behalf of Mrs. Obama and the Nation and restate his commitment to honoring the bravery and service of law enforcement personnel.

In the afternoon, upon arrival in Anchorage, AK, the President traveled to Hotel Captain Cook. Later, he traveled to the Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to the Hotel Captain Cook.

In the evening, the President traveled to the residence of Alice Rogoff, publisher of the Alaska Dispatch News, where he had dinner. Later, he returned to the Hotel Captain Cook, where he remained overnight.

September 1

In the morning, while en route to Seward, AK, the President stopped at Snow City Cafe in Anchorage, where he ordered breakfast and greeted patrons.

In the afternoon, upon arrival in Seward, the President hiked to Outlook Point at Exit Glacier in Kenai Fjords National Park. Later, while hiking in the park, he recorded an interview with Bear Grylls of NBC's "Running Wild With Bear Grylls" program for later broadcast.

In the afternoon, at the Sweet Darlings shop in Seward, the President purchased gelato for himself and the travel pool of reporters accompanying him. Later, he traveled to Seward Harbor, where he embarked on boat tour of the Kenai Fjords National Park and Resurrection Bay with Laura Sturtz, National Park Service Operations Supervisor for Interpretation, and viewed local wildlife and geographic features.

In the evening, the President returned to Hotel Captain Cook in Anchorage, where he remained overnight.

September 2

In the morning, the President traveled to Dillingham, AK.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Kanakanak Beach, where he met with local fishermen and their families and viewed a demonstration of local salmon preparation methods.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Dillingham Middle/High School, where he attended and participated in a student cultural performance featuring Yup'ik dancing. Then, at N&N Market, he met with patrons. Later, he traveled to Kotzebue, AK. While en route aboard Air Force One, he participated in a fly-over of the island village of Kivalina, an Alaska Native community of 400 people whose coastline has begun receding into the ocean as a result of rising sea levels.

In the evening, at Kotzebue Middle/High School, the President participated in an interview and photo shoot with Jeff Goodell of Rolling Stone magazine for later publication. Later, he traveled to the site of the Shore Avenue Erosion Project, where he viewed the city's beach reconstruction and erosion-prevention efforts. Then, at the sea wall overlooking the Kotzebue Sound, he continued his interview with Rolling Stone's Jeff Goodell. Also at the sea wall, he recorded a self-narrated video on the impact of climate change on Alaska's landscape and native cultures for later online broadcast.

Later in the evening, while en route to Anchorage, AK, the President stopped at the huskie kennel of John Baker, the 2011 Iditarod dog sledding champion, where he met with Mr. Baker and his family, was presented with a Team Baker hat and jacket, and held two of Mr. Baker's puppies. Then, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving the following morning.

September 3

In the evening, the President published a comment on a Humans of New York Facebook post about a young Iranian boy whose father remarked that the boy strives to help those in need.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Boston, MA, on September 7.

The White House announced that the President will award the 2014 National Medal of Arts and the National Humanities Medal on September 10.

September 4

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Cabinet Room, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had a working lunch with King Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia. Later, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter. Then, in the Oval Office, he participated in departure photographs with Maurice Owens, outgoing Special Assistant to the White House Chief of Staff, and members of his family.

The White House announced that the President will welcome the 2015 NCAA Champion Duke University men's basketball team to the White House on September 8.

September 5

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan of Abu Dhabi, Deputy Supreme Commander of the United Arab Emirates Armed Forces, to offer his condolences for the deaths of 45 Emirati servicemembers fighting Houthi rebels in Sana'a, Yemen, on September 4.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

September 6

The White House announced that the President and Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden, will travel to Warren, MI, on September 9.

September 7

In the morning, the President traveled to Boston, MA.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Union Oyster House restaurant, where he purchased clam chowder and visited with patrons. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

September 8

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew.

The President announced the nomination of Clare E. Connors to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Hawaii.

The President announced the nomination of Stephanie A. Gallagher to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland.

The President announced the nomination of Mary S. McElroy to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Rhode Island.

The President announced the nomination of Edward L. Gilmore to be U.S. marshal for the Northern District of Illinois.

The President announced the appointment of the following individuals as members of the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Access Board:

Regina D. Blye;
Christopher S. Hart;
Mathew McCollough;
Victor S. Pineda; and
Karen M. Tamley.

September 9

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President and Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Biden, traveled to Warren, MI, where, at Macomb Community College, they toured the Michigan Technical Education Center with Engineering and Advanced Technology Workforce and Continuing Education Director Holger Ekanger and met with students. Then, at the college's Sports and Expo Center, they met with members of the College Promise Advisory Board. Later, they returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Obama will greet Pope Francis on his arrival in the U.S. at Joint Base Andrews, MD, on September 22.

September 10

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President held a conference call with over 500 rabbis in observance of Rosh Hashanah. During the call, he discussed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, Israel's security, and Israel-U.S. relations.

The President announced his intention to nominate Barbara J. Lee, Christopher H. Smith, and Cassandra Q. Butts to be Representatives of the United States to the 70th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

September 11

In the morning, on the South Lawn, the President and Mrs. Obama participated in a moment of silence to mark the 14th anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Later, in the Oval Office, he had an intelligence

briefing followed by a meeting with Secretary of State John F. Kerry.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Fort Meade, MD, where, at the National Security Agency, he met with military and civilian intelligence personnel to thank them for their ongoing support in defense of the Nation. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Des Moines, IA, on September 14.

The White House announced that the President will welcome the 2015 NCAA Champion University of Connecticut women's basketball team to the White House on September 15.

September 14

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Des Moines, IA. Then, he traveled to the Ola Babcock Miller Building, where, at the State Library of Iowa, he was greeted by State Librarian Michael Scott and participated in an interview with novelist Marilynne Robinson for the New York Review of Books. Later, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

September 15

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, also in the Oval Office, the President met with Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Mathews Burwell.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Diplomatic Reception Room, he and Mrs. Obama greeted King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia of Spain.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore to congratulate him on his party's victory in recent elections and discuss U.S.-Singapore relations. He also had separate telephone conversations with outgoing Prime Minister Anthony J. Abbott and Prime Minister-elect Malcolm B. Turnbull of Australia to thank Prime Minister Abbott for his strong support of Australia-U.S. relations and wish him well in the future, congratulate Prime Minister-elect Turnbull on his selection as Prime Minister, and pledge to continue working with Australia on a range of issues of mutual interest.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Xi Jinping of China to the White House on September 25.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert M. Califf to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs at the Department of Health and Human Services.

The President announced his intention to nominate Eduardo Castell to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Deborah R. Malac to be Ambassador to Uganda.

The President announced his intention to nominate Lisa J. Peterson to be Ambassador to Swaziland.

The President announced his intention to nominate H. Dean Pittman to be Ambassador to Mozambique.

The President announced his intention to nominate Linda A. Puchala to be a member of the National Mediation Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Eric S. Rubin to be Ambassador to Bulgaria.

The President announced his intention to nominate Kyle R. Scott to be Ambassador to Serbia.

The President announced his intention to appoint Octaviana Trujillo as a member of the Joint Public Advisory Committee of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation.

The President announced the nomination of Rebecca Goodgame Ebinger to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Iowa.

September 16

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Bethesda, MD, where, at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, he visited with wounded U.S. servicemembers and their families. Later, he traveled to the Mark O. Hatfield Clinical Research Center, a facility of the National Institutes of Health, to visit with another wounded U.S. servicemember. Then, he returned to Washington, DC.

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with Gov. Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown, Jr., of California to receive an update on the recent wildfires, express his concern about the severe damage in California and its impact on citizens, offer his gratitude for the firefighters, local authorities, and emergency managers working to combat the fires and evacuate people from harm's way, and reiterate his support for assisting California in building resilience toward climate change.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel to the White House on November 9.

September 17

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Then, also in the Oval Office, he had a telephone conversation with King Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia to follow up on their September 4 meeting at the White House, discuss regional issues, including the humanitarian situation in Yemen and recent violence and tensions at the Haram Al-Sharif/Temple Mount in Jerusalem, and reaffirm Saudi Arabia-U.S. relations. Later, also in the Oval Office, he met with Secretary of State John F. Kerry.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in a credentialing ceremony for newly appointed Ambassadors to the U.S. Then, also in the Oval Office, he met with Senate Minority Leader Harry M. Reid and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi. Later, at the St. Regis Washington, DC hotel, he attended a Democratic National Committee roundtable fundraiser.

September 18

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President and Vice President Biden met with members of the President's Council of Advisers on Science and Technology. Later, he had a telephone conservation with President Raúl Castro Ruz of Cuba to discuss the normalization of Cuba-U.S. relations in advance of Pope Francis's upcoming visits to Cuba and the United States, commend the role that Pope Francis played in advancing Cuba-U.S. diplomatic ties, and note the cooperation between U.S. and Cuban medical professionals during the U.S. Naval Ship *Comfort*'s recent humanitarian mission to Haiti.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ricardo A. Aguilera to be Assistant Secretary for Financial Management at the Department of the Air Force.

The President announced his intention to nominate Janine A. Davidson to be Under Secretary of the Navy.

The President announced his intention to nominate Lisa S. Disbrow to be Under Secretary of the Air Force.

The President announced his intention to nominate Eric K. Fanning to be Secretary of the Army.

The President announced his intention to nominate Shoshana M. Lew to be Chief Financial Officer at the Department of Transportation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jennifer M. O'Connor to be General Counsel at the Department of Defense.

The President announced his intention to nominate Thomas A. Shannon, Jr., to be Under Secretary for Political Affairs at the Department of State.

September 21

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with Sultan Qaboos bin

Said Al Said of Oman to thank him for his efforts to secure the release of Scott Darden and Sam Farran, U.S. citizens detained in Sanaa, Yemen, by Shiite Houthi rebels fighting Government forces and for his continued assistance in attending to the situation in Yemen.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo of Indonesia to the White House on October 26.

September 22

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President, Mrs. Obama, and Vice President Joe Biden and his wife Jill T. Biden traveled to Joint Base Andrews, MD, where they greeted Pope Francis upon his arrival. Later, the President and Mrs. Obama returned to the White House.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany to discuss the refugee crisis in Europe and the need for EU countries to accept their fair share of refugees and reiterate the importance of Russia's adherence to the Minsk agreements in resolving the situation in eastern Ukraine.

The President announced a major disaster in California and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the area affected by the Valley Fire beginning on September 12 and continuing.

September 23

In the morning, in the Grand Foyer and Red Room, the President participated in a gift presentation with Pope Francis. Then, in the Oval Office, he met with the Pope.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had lunch. Later, in the Oval Office, the President had a telephone conversation with President Enrique Peña Nieto of Mexico to discuss the status of Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations, the importance of concluding the trade deal expediently, and Mexico-U.S. relations.

September 24

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the evening, at the Blair House, the President had a working dinner for President Xi Jinping of China. Vice President Biden also attended.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom to discuss the refugee crisis in Europe, the situation in Syria, their joint commitment to defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, and the importance of reaching a strong international agreement at the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris. He also had a telephone with Prime Minister Alexios Tsipras of Greece to congratulate him on his election victory and his party's success in the recent parliamentary elections, discuss the refugee crisis in Europe, and reaffirm Greek-U.S. relations.

Also during the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President Ollanta Moises Humala Tasso of Peru to discuss the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations and other economic issues.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the President's Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships:

Carroll A. Baltimore;
Preeta Bansal;
David Beckmann;
Kara Bobroff;
Jennifer Butler;
Steve Gutow;
Aziza Hasan;
Lanae Erickson Hatalsky;
David Jeffrey;
Jo Anne Lyon;
Michael McBride;
Nipun Mehta;
Kevin Ryan;
Gabriel A. Salguero;
Stephen Schneck;
Jasjit Singh;
Alexie Torres-Fleming; and
Deborah Weinstein.

September 25

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden met with President Xi Jinping of China. Later, in the Cabinet Room, the President had an expanded bilateral meeting with President Xi.

In the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner to discuss his resignation from Congress. Later, he traveled to Arlington, VA. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

In the evening, on the North Portico, the President and Mrs. Obama greeted President Xi of China and his wife Peng Liyuan. Then, on the Grand Staircase, they participated in a photog opportunity with President Xi and Madam Peng.

The White House announced that the President will travel to New York City on September 27.

September 27

In the morning, the President traveled to New York City. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with President Michelle Bachelet Jeria of Chile to discuss Chile-U.S. economic relations, the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations, the upcoming U.N. General Assembly meetings, and the Our Ocean Conference to be hosted by Chile in October. He also reiterated his condolences for the loss of life caused by the September 16 earthquake in central Chile. Upon arrival in New York City, he traveled to the Lotte New York Palace hotel.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to United Nations Headquarters. Later, at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, he met with Mission employees and their families. Then, he returned to the Lotte New York Palace hotel. Later, he traveled to Gotham Hall.

In the evening, the President returned to the Lotte New York Palace hotel, where he remained overnight.

September 28

In the morning, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to United Nations Headquarters in New York City.

In the afternoon, in the Economic and Social Council Chamber at U.N. Headquarters, the President participated in a family photograph for the Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping. Also at U.N. Headquarters, on the sidelines of the United Nations Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping, he met with President Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine.

Later, in the Security Council Consultations Room, he met with President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia to discuss the situations in Ukraine and Syria.

In the evening, the President returned to the Lotte New York Palace hotel, where, in the Villard Ballroom, he and Mrs. Obama hosted a reception for visiting heads of state and government attending the U.N. General Assembly. They remained at the hotel overnight.

September 29

In the morning, the President traveled to United Nations Headquarters, where, in Conference Room C, he met with President Raúl Castro Ruz of Cuba to discuss Cuba-U.S. relations, the recent visit of Pope Francis to both countries, U.S. regulatory changes regarding travel by U.S. citizens to Cuba, and human rights in Cuba. Later, following the Leaders' Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism, in the Trusteeship Council Chamber, he met with Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi of Iraq.

In the afternoon, in Conference Room C, the President met with President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan. Later, he and Mrs. Obama returned to Washington, DC.

September 30

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. The President was also briefed by Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco on the Federal Government's preparations for Hurricane Joaquin.

In the afternoon, in the East Room, the President greeted wounded U.S. servicemembers and their families during a tour of the White House.

October 1

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew.

During the day, the President was briefed by Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco on the Federal Government's preparations for Hurricane Joaquin. He also had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Malcolm B. Turnbull of Australia to discuss Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations, efforts to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, and the situation in Syria.

October 2

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President was briefed by Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco, and other senior staff on the Federal Government's preparations for Hurricane Joaquin. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, he recorded a video message to be broadcast to participants in the Our Ocean Conference in Chile on October 5.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Emmitsburg, MD, on October 4.

The President announced his intention to nominate Todd C. Chapman to be Ambassador to Ecuador.

The President announced his intention to nominate Steven M. Haro to be Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs at the Department of Commerce.

The President announced his intention to nominate John F. Kotek to be Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy at the Department of Energy.

The President announced his intention to nominate Carolyn N. Lerner to be Special Counsel, Office of Special Counsel.

The President announced his intention to nominate Matthew J. Matthews for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as U.S. Senior Official for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum at the Department of State.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael J. Missal to be Inspector General at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The President announced his intention to appoint Pamela K. Anderson and Gebisa Ejeta as members of the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development.

The President announced his intention to appoint Ronald A. Cass, Jonathan Sallet, and Jane Sherburne as members of the Council of the Administrative Conference of the U.S.

The President announced his intention to appoint Bo Thao-Urabe as a member of the President's Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

October 3

During the day, the President was briefed on the U.S. military airstrike on a Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, that killed and injured several patients and staff.

The President declared an emergency in South Carolina and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts in the areas affected by severe storms and flooding beginning on October 1 and continuing.

October 4

In the morning, the President traveled to Emmitsburg, MD.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

October 5

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Map Room, the President recorded an interview with Bill Simmons of HBO followed by a photo shoot in the Diplomatic Reception Room for publication in

GQ magazine. Then, in the Library, he participated in a photo shoot with Ryan Pfluger of Out magazine.

The President declared a major disaster in South Carolina and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms and flooding beginning on October 1 and continuing.

October 6

In the morning, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, at the Department of Agriculture, the President and Secretary of Agriculture Thomas J. Vilsack recorded an interview with Tom Steever of Brownfield Ag News Radio for later broadcast. Also at the Department of Agriculture, he recorded an interview with Kai Ryssdal of NPR's "Marketplace" program for later broadcast. Then, in the Private Dining Room, he and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, he recorded an interview with Steve Kroft of CBS's "60 Minutes" program for later broadcast.

October 7

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) International President Joanne Liu to apologize and offer condolences for the loss of life and injury among patients and MSF staff as a result of the mistaken U.S. military airstrike on a hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, on October 3, offer assurances that the Department of Defense would conduct a thorough, objective, and transparent investigation into the incident, and pledge full cooperation with the joint investigations being conducted with NATO and the Afghan Government. Then, he had a telephone conversation with President Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai of Afghanistan to commend the bravery of Afghan National Defense and Security Forces, offer his condolences for the deaths and injuries caused by the U.S. airstrike on the MSF hospital in Kunduz, and discuss Afghanistan-U.S. relations. Later, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of State John F. Kerry.

The White House announced that the President will travel to the San Francisco, CA, area on October 9 and 10.

The White House announced that President will travel to the Los Angeles, CA, area on October 10.

The White House announced that President will travel to the San Diego, CA, area from October 10 through 12.

October 8

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Roseburg, OR, on October 9.

The President announced his intention to nominate Dana J. Boente to be U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert L. Capers to be U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New York. The President announced his intention to nominate John P. Fishwick, Jr., to be U.S. attorney for the Western District of Virginia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Channing D. Phillips to be U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Emily Gray Rice to be U.S. attorney for the District of New Hampshire.

The President announced his intention to nominate Randolph J. Seiler to be U.S. attorney for the District of South Dakota.

The President announced his intention to nominate Amos J. Hochstein to be Assistant Secretary for Energy Resources at the Department of State.

The President announced his intention to nominate David McKean to be Ambassador to Luxembourg.

The President announced his intention to appoint Raymond Dolan as a member of the President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee.

October 9

In the morning, the President traveled to Roseburg, OR, arriving in the afternoon. Upon arrival at Roseburg Regional Airport, he was joined by Gov. Kate Brown of Oregon, who updated the President on the shooting at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg on October 1 and the State's ongoing efforts to provide support and resources to the families affected.

In the afternoon, the President and Gov. Brown traveled to Roseburg High School, where he met with families of the victims killed in the shooting at Umpqua Community College. Then, also at Roseburg High School, he met with first responders and college administrators to thank them for their admirable response to the shooting and express his condolences to the school community. Later, he traveled to Seattle, WA, where, at the Westin Seattle hotel, he attended a Democratic National Committee roundtable fundraiser.

In the evening, the President traveled to San Francisco, CA, where, at a private residence, he attended a Democratic National Committee roundtable fundraiser. Later, he traveled to the Fairmont San Francisco hotel, where he remained overnight.

October 10

In the morning, the President traveled to Los Angeles, CA, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, at a private residence, the President attended a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee fundraiser.

In the evening, the President traveled to Rancho Santa Fe, CA, where, at the Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa, he remained overnight.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey to offer his condolences for the injuries and loss of life due to the terrorist attack at a peace rally in Ankara, Turkey, and reaffirm U.S. solidarity with Turkey in the effort to combat terrorism.

October 12

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

October 13

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch.

October 14

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Oval Office, they met with Secretary of State John F. Kerry. Then, in the Roosevelt room, the President recorded an interview with John Kopp of Fox News for the documentary "Destiny and Power—The Private Diaries of George Herbert Walker Bush," for later broadcast.

The White House announced that the President will host a White House Astronomy Night event for students, teachers, scientists, astronauts, and others on October 19.

The White House announced that the President will award the Medal of Honor to Capt. Florent A. Groberg, USA, on November 12.

October 15

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with Cheryl Reeve, head coach of the Women's National Basketball Association's Minnesota Lynx, to congratulate her on her team's victory in the WNBA Finals. Then, he had a telephone conversation with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey to discuss strengthening Turkey-U.S. cooperation in the fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, reiterate his condolences for the October 10 terrorist attack in Ankara, and stress the urgent need to stop the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) attacks in Turkey.

The President declared a major disaster in Washington and ordered Federal aid to supple-

ment State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by a severe windstorm on August 29.

October 16

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, in the Oval Office, the President met with actor and comedian Eddie Murphy, recipient of the Kennedy Center's Mark Twain Prize for American Humor. Later, also in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Biden met with President Park Geun-hye of South Korea.

In the afternoon, in the Cabinet Room, the President and Vice President Biden had a working lunch with President Park.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan of Abu Dhabi, Deputy Supreme Commander of the United Arab Emirates Armed Forces, to discuss the importance of establishing conditions for a political transition in Syria and the urgency of expanding humanitarian assistance in Yemen.

The President declared a major disaster in Washington and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the area affected by a severe windstorm on August 29.

October 19

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President had a telephone conversation with National Aeronautics and Space Administration astronauts Scott J. Kelly and Kjell N. Lindgren aboard the International Space Station. Later, also in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden met with Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Charleston, WV, on October 21.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan to the White House on October 22.

The White House announced that the President will host the White House Tribal Nations Conference on November 5.

October 20

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Then, also in the Oval Office, he met with 2014 Enrico Fermi Award recipients Claudio Pellegrini and Charles V. Shank.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had lunch. Later, in the Oval Office, they met with Secretary of State John F. Kerry. Then, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister–designate Justin P.J. Trudeau of Canada to congratulate him on his party's victory in parliamentary elections and discuss Canada-U.S. relations, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and the upcoming U.N. climate change conference in Paris, France.

Later in the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter. Then, also in the Oval Office, he recorded an interview with Partisan Pictures President Peter Schnall, director and producer of the documentary "The White House: Inside Story," for later broadcast on PBS.

The President announced his intention to nominate Hester M. Peirce and Lisa M. Fairfax to be Commissioners on the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Linda I. Etim to be a member of the Board of Directors for the African Development Foundation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jean E. Manes to be Ambassador to El Salvador.

The President announced his intention to nominate Scot A. Marciel to be Ambassador to Burma.

The President announced his intention to nominate Linda Swartz Taglialatela to be Ambassador to Barbados, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The President declared a major disaster in Washington and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the area affected by wildfires and mudslides from August 9 through September 10.

October 21

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, also in the Oval Office, the President had a separate meeting with Vice President Biden. Then, he had a telephone conversation with outgoing Prime Minister Stephen J. Harper of Canada to discuss Canada-U.S. relations and the Trans-Pacific Partnership and wish him well in his future endeavors.

In the afternoon, in the Rose Garden, the President attended Vice President Biden's announcement that he would not be a candidate in the 2016 Presidential election. Then, he traveled to Charleston, WV. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

In the evening, in the State Dining Room, the President hosted a working reception for House and Senate Democrats to discuss trade issues.

The White House announced that the President will host a panel discussion on criminal justice reform on October 22.

The White House announced that the President will welcome the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team to the White House on October 27 to congratulate them on their victory in the 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup.

October 22

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

October 23

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Map Room, the President recorded a video address for broadcast during the October 31 peace rally in Rabin Square in Tel Aviv, Israel, commemorating the 20th anniversary of the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel. Then, also in the Map Room, he recorded a Facebook video post on the administration's call to reduce standardized testing in K–12 schools for online broadcast on October 24. Later, at the Grand Hyatt Washington hotel, he attended a Democratic National Committee roundtable fundraiser.

October 25

In the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan of Abu Dhabi, Deputy Supreme Commander of the United Arab Emirates Armed Forces, to discuss international diplomatic efforts to address the situation in Syria, ongoing political unrest and violence in Yemen, the political situation in Libya, and efforts to combat Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula and other terrorist groups.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Chicago, IL, on October 27 and 28.

October 26

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, also in the Oval Office, he met with teachers and representatives of States and school districts to discuss shared efforts to reduce the amount of time students spend on redundant or low-quality tests, while still ensuring that teachers and parents have the information they need on student progress. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Acting Secretary–designate of Education John B. King, Jr., also attended.

In the afternoon, the President, White House Chief of Staff Denis R. McDonough, and Director of Legislative Affairs Katherine Beirne Fallon walked to the Metropolitan Club, where the President attended a luncheon hosted by former Sens. Thomas A. Daschle and George J. Mitchell. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with Secretary of State John F. Kerry.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Turkey, the Philippines, and Malaysia from November 14 through 22.

October 27

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with King Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia to discuss cooperative efforts to counter the shared threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, international

diplomatic efforts to achieve a political transition in Syria, the situation in Yemen, and Saudi Arabia-U.S. relations.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Chicago, IL, where, in the North Service Hallway of the McCormick Place conference center, he met with spouses and children of law enforcement officers who were killed in the line of duty. Also at McCormick Place, in the East Service Corridor, he met with the families of bystander victims of gun violence in Chicago. Later, at the PowerReviews headquarters, he attended a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee roundtable fundraiser.

In the evening, at the United Center, the President attended a basketball game between the National Basketball Association's Chicago Bulls and Cleveland Cavaliers. Later, he traveled to his Hyde Park-Kenwood residence, where he remained overnight.

October 28

In the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with outgoing Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition To Counter ISIL John R. Allen.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Rep. Paul D. Ryan to congratulate him on his election as Speaker of the House of Representatives and wish him well in his new responsibilities.

October 29

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, the President had a telephone conversation with Amir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani of Qatar to discuss the importance of achieving a successful political transition in Syria and international diplomatic efforts to facilitate a resolution to the conflict, underscore their support for the United Nations role in continued political negotiations in Libya, and review joint efforts to counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization and other extremist groups.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Oval Office, they met with Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter.

In the evening, the President traveled to McLean, VA, where, at a private residence, he attended a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee roundtable fundraiser. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

October 30

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi of Iraq to discuss the political and security situation in Iraq, underscore U.S. support for Iraq in its fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, note recent progress made by Iraqi security forces in Bayji and Ramadi, and commend the Prime Minister's efforts to combat corruption and implement governance reforms critical to promoting Iraq's political stability and economic prosperity.

In the afternoon, on the South Portico, the President and Mrs. Obama greeted local schoolchildren and children of U.S. servicemembers trick-or-treating at the White House for Halloween.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Newark, NJ, on November 2.

The White House announced further details on the President's participation in the White House Tribal Nations Conference on November 5.

The President declared a major disaster in Alaska and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the area affected by a severe storm on August 27.

November 1

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the Inauguration of Alassane Dramane Ouattara as President of Côte d'Ivoire in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on November 3: Thomas A. Shannon, Jr. (head of delegation); Terence P. McCulley; and Linda Thomas-Greenfield.

November 2

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Newark, NJ. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with Manager Edgar F. "Ned" Yost III of Major League Baseball's Kansas City Royals to congratulate him on his team's victory in the World Series. Upon arrival in Newark, he traveled to Integrity House, a nonprofit substance abuse rehabilitation center, where he toured the facilities and met with Sen. Cory A. Booker, Newark Mayor Ras J. Baraka, Integrity House President and Chief Executive Officer Robert J. Budsock, Women's Outpatient Program and Halfway House Director Robin Shorter, residents Daryl Rose, Stephanie Luna, and Sharon Boatwright, and other center staff and residents. Then, in the Green Room of the Integrity House, he recorded an interview with Lester Holt of NBC's "Nightly News With Lester Holt" program for later broadcast.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to the Rutgers University–Newark campus, where, in the Reading Gallery of the Center for Law and Justice building, he participated in a roundtable discussion on prisoner reentry and rehabilitation programs with Mayor Baraka, Sen. Booker, U.S. District Judge for the District of New Jersey Madeline Cox Arleo, U.S. Probation Officer Kevin Egli, Forem Facility Management President David Forem, and former inmates Amarilis Diamond-Rodriguez, Dquan Rosario, and Terry Williams.

Later, in the New Jersey Reference Room, he recorded another interview with NBC News anchor Lester Holt. Then, he traveled to New York City.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

November 3

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, the President met with Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski and Rep. Nita M. Lowey to discuss the appropriations process and the Federal budget.

November 4

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in a teleconference call with Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Mathews Burwell and Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in-person assisters and volunteers to discuss open enrollment in the Federal health insurance exchange. Later, he traveled to Potomac, MD.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

November 5

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President recorded separate "Live From the White House" interviews with Mary Shedden of WUSF in Tampa, FL, Alice Rios of KRLD in Dallas, TX, E.J. Becker of KMBZ in Kansas City, MO, Dave Ross of KIRO in Seattle, WA, and Ryan Cameron of WVEE in Atlanta, GA, to discuss the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the importance of reducing the number of people without health insurance.

The President announced his intention to nominate Karen Brevard Stewart to be Ambassador to the Marshall Islands.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert A. Riley III to be Ambassador to Micronesia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Vik Edwin Stoll to be a judge on the U.S. Tax Court.

The President announced his intention to appoint Jaime Castillo as Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs at the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

November 6

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch.

The White House announced further details on the President's awarding of the Medal of Honor to Capt. Florent A. Groberg, USA, on November 12.

November 9

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President met with National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice and Secretary of State John F. Kerry prior to his meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Secretary of State Kerry. Vice President Joe Biden also attended. Then, also in the Oval office, he had separate telephone conversations with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu of Turkey to congratulate the Turkish people on the November 1 elections and preview the upcoming Group of Twenty (G–20) summit in Antalya, Turkey. They also discussed the situation in Syria, efforts to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, and the need to prevent terrorist attacks in Turkey by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) terrorist organization.

November 10

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India to discuss India-U.S. relations, the upcoming Group of Twenty (G–20) summit, East Asia Summit, and U.N. Climate Change Conference in Paris, and implementation of the Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region. The President also noted that their conversation represented the first use of the new secure line between the two leaders and wished Prime Minister Modi a happy Diwali.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with 2015 Nobel Prize winners William C. Campbell, Angus Deaton, Paul Modrich, and Aziz Sancar, Sweden's Ambassador to the U.S. Bjorn Lyrvall, and Norway's Ambassador to the U.S. Kare Aas. Later, also in the Oval Office, he met with Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Reuven Rivlin of Israel to the White House on December 9.

The President announced his intention to nominate Beth F. Cobert to be Director of the Office of Personnel Management.

November 11

In the morning, in the State Dining Room, the President hosted a Veterans Day breakfast for veterans and their families. Vice President Joe Biden also attended. Later, he and Vice President Biden traveled to Arlington, VA, where they participated in a wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, he had a telephone conversation with President Jacob Zuma of South Africa to discuss the upcoming U.N. Climate Change Conference in Paris, France, the situation in Burundi, and President Obama's November 5 notification to Congress regarding the African Growth and Opportunity Act. He also expressed his condolences for the death of a South African citizen in the November 9 shooting at the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center in Amman, Jordan.

In the evening, the President had separate telephone conversations with National League for Democracy Party Leader Aung San Suu Kyi and President Thein Sein of Burma to discuss the November 8 parliamentary elections. He congratulated Aung San Suu Kyi on her party's success in the elections and discussed with both leaders the importance for all parties to respect the official results once announced and work together to form an inclusive, representative Government. He also noted that the election and formation of a new Government could be an important step forward in Burma's democratic transition.

November 12

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan of Abu Dhabi, Deputy Supreme Commander of the United Arab Emirates Armed Forces, to discuss the situations in Syria and Yemen and the need to support the Iraqi Government's efforts to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

In the afternoon, in the Cabinet Room, the President recorded an interview with George Stephanopoulos of ABC's "This Week" program for later broadcast.

During the day, the President was briefed on a U.S. airstrike in Raqqa, Syria, targeting Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization member Mohammed "Jihadi John" Emwazi.

The President announced his intention to appoint Joshua M. Javitz as Chair of Presidential Emergency Board No. 249.

The President announced his intention to appoint Elizabeth Neumeier and Nancy E. Peace as members of Presidential Emergency Board No. 249.

November 13

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President François Hollande of France to discuss the upcoming U.N. Climate Change Conference in Paris and Group of Twenty (G–20) summit in Antalya, Turkey. Then, also in the Oval Office, he met with Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz, President of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB); Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl, Archbishop of Washington, DC; and Monsignor Ronny Jenkins, General Secretary of the USCCB. Vice President Joe Biden also attended.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Oval Office, the President was briefed by Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco on the terrorist attacks in Paris, France. National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice, White House Chief of Staff Denis R. McDonough, and White House Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest also attended.

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with President François Hollande of France to express his condolences for the terrorist attacks in Paris, France, offer U.S. support in the investigation, and pledge continued France-U.S. counterterrorism cooperation.

November 14

In the afternoon, in the Situation Room, the President met with the National Security Council to review the latest intelligence concerning the November 13 terrorist attacks in Paris, France, review the U.S. security posture in light of the attacks, reaffirm close coordination with French authorities investigating the attacks, and discuss diplomatic security measures at the U.S. Embassy in Paris. Then, he traveled to Antalya, Turkey, arriving the following morning.

November 15

In the morning, upon arrival in Antalya, Turkey, the President traveled to the Calista Luxury Resort. Later, he traveled to the Regnum Carya Golf and Spa Resort.

In the afternoon, at the Regnum Carya Resort, the President participated in an arrival ceremony for Group of Twenty (G–20) leaders. Then, he participated in a family photograph with G–20 leaders followed by a working lunch in the Leaders Dining Room. Later, also at the Regnum Carya Resort, in Plenary Hall, he attended a working session for G–20 leaders.

During the day, at the Regnum Carya Resort, the President met with President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia on the margins of the G–20 summit to discuss the situation in Syria, the November 13 terrorist attacks in Paris, France, the need for all nations to confront the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, international diplomatic efforts to resolve the situation in Ukraine, and the loss of Russian life in the October 31 crash of Metrojet Flight 9268 over Egypt.

In the evening, in Villa 6300 of the Regnum Carya Resort, the President met with King

Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia to discuss efforts to defeat ISIL, the terrorist attacks in Paris, France, the urgency of achieving a cease-fire and political transition in Syria, the need to provide robust support to the moderate Syrian opposition, and methods to support the Iraqi Government's efforts to combat ISIL. Secretary of State John F. Kerry, National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice, Deputy National Security Adviser for International Economics Caroline M. Atkinson, National Security Council Coordinator for the Middle East, North Africa, and the Gulf Region Robert Malley, and Special Envoy for the Global Coalition To Counter ISIL Brett H. McGurk also attended. Then, in the Leaders Dining Room, he had a working dinner with G–20 leaders. Later, he returned to the Calista Luxury Resort, where he remained overnight.

November 16

In the morning, in Candor Hall 2 of the Calista Luxury Resort, the President visited with U.S. Embassy personnel. Then, he traveled to the Regnum Carya Golf and Spa Resort, where, in Plenary Hall, he met with Group of Twenty (G–20) leaders.

In the afternoon, in the Leaders Dining Room at the Regnum Carya Resort, the President had a working lunch for G–20 leaders. Later, in Villa 6300, he met with Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom, Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, Prime Minister Matteo Renzi of Italy, and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development Laurent Fabius of France to discuss the November 13 terrorist attacks in Paris, the urgency of continuing and enhancing multilateral action to counter the threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, the international commitment to achieving a diplomatic resolution to the situation in Syria, efforts to mitigate the plight of those displaced by the Syrian conflict, and their agreement to maintain sanctions against Russia until full implementation of the Minsk agreements to resolve the situation in Ukraine is achieved. Secretary of State John F. Kerry and National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice also attended. Later, he traveled to the Hotel Riu Kaya Palazzo 5 resort in Belek, Turkey.

In the evening, the President traveled to Manila, Philippines, arriving the following morning.

The White House announced that the President will present the Medal of Freedom on November 24.

November 17

In the morning, upon arrival in Manila, Philippines, the President traveled to the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila hotel.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Manila Harbor, where he toured the BRP *Gregorio del Pilar*, a former U.S. Coast Guard frigate now part of the Philippines Navy, with the ship's commanding officer, Capt. Vincent Sibala. Later, he traveled to the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila hotel, where he remained overnight.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President François Hollande of France to the White House on November 24.

November 18

In the afternoon, at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila hotel, in the garden tent, the President participated in a family photograph with the leaders of Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) nations. Later, he traveled to the Philippine International Convention Center, where he attended a Pacific Alliance meeting. Then, he returned to the Sofitel.

In the evening, the President traveled to the SM Mall of Asia Arena in Pasay, Philippines, where he participated in a family photograph for Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) leaders. Then, he attended an APEC welcome dinner and cultural performance. Later, he returned to the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila hotel in Manila, where he remained overnight.

During the day, the President was briefed on the law enforcement action undertaken in St. Denis, France, as part of the ongoing investigation into the November 13 terrorist attacks in Paris.

November 19

In the morning, the President traveled to the Philippine International Convention Center, where he participated in a family photograph for Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) leaders. Then, in Meeting Room 1 of the convention center, he attended the opening session of the APEC retreat.

In the afternoon, the President returned to the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila hotel. Later, he traveled to the Philippine International Convention Center, where, in Meeting Room 1, he attended the second session of the APEC retreat. Later, also in Meeting Room 1, he attended the closing session of the APEC retreat.

In the evening, the President returned to the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila hotel, where he remained overnight. He also had a telephone conversation with President François Hollande of France to discuss the latest developments in the investigation into the November 13 terrorist attacks in Paris and reiterate their joint commitment to counter the threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

The President announced his intention to nominate Phillip H. Cullom to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations, and Environment.

The President announced his intention to nominate Swati A. Dandekar to be a U.S. Executive Director of the Asian Development Bank, with the rank of Ambassador.

The President announced his intention to nominate Harry R. Hoglander to be a member of the National Mediation Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Daniel B. Maffei to be a Commissioner of the Federal Maritime Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Georgette Mosbacher to be a member of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy.

The President announced his intention to nominate Patrick Pizzella to be a member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority.

The President announced his intention to appoint Dave Eggers as a member of the Advisory Committee on the Arts for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The President announced his intention to appoint William H. Graham as a member of the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin.

The President announced his intention to appoint David C. Hill as a Commissioner of the Mississippi River Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Barry Jackson as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

The President announced the appointment of Anthony M. Reardon as a member of the Federal Salary Council and member of the National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations.

November 20

In the morning, at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila hotel, in the garden tent, the President visited with U.S. Embassy personnel and their families. Later, he traveled to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Taylor's University in Subang Jaya, Malaysia.

In the evening, the President traveled to the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre in Kuala Lumpur. He also had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Matteo Renzi of Italy to discuss counterterrorism cooperation, the campaign to counter the threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, and the urgent need to end the conflict in Syria. Later, he traveled to the Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur hotel, where he remained overnight.

During the day, the President received a briefing on the terrorist attack and hostage crisis at the Radisson Blu Bamako Hotel in Bamako, Mali, from National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice.

The White House announced that the President will pardon the National Thanksgiving Turkey in the Rose Garden on November 25.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the state com-

memoration service for former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of Germany in Hamburg, Germany, on November 23: Henry A. Kissinger (head of delegation); and John B. Emerson.

November 21

In the morning, the President traveled to the Dignity for Children Foundation, where he toured the school and training center and met with students.

In the evening, the President traveled to the Kuala Lumpur City Centre, where, in Conference Room 2, he participated in a group photograph with Ambassadors to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Then, in Exhibition Halls 1 and 2, he attended an East Asia Summit gala dinner. Later, he returned to the Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur hotel, where he remained overnight.

November 22

In the morning, at the Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur hotel, in the Banquet Hall, the President met with U.S. Embassy personnel and their families.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving the following morning.

November 24

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden met with President François Hollande of France.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey to discuss Turkey's downing of a Russian aircraft, U.S.-NATO support of Turkey's right to defend its sovereignty, and the importance of reducing tensions with Russia, and reiterate their joint commitment to counter the threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

November 25

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Crystal Sanchez and Kenneth Huertas of Lawndale, CA, Urbana Anam and Jannatul "Alifa" Rowshan of New York City, Rachel Gorgas of Encinitas, CA, and Joseph Fortuno of Hercules, CA, winners of youth entrepreneurship competitions sponsored by the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship and Junior Achievement. Later, he had a telephone conversation with President-elect Mauricio Macri of Argentina to congratulate him on his election victory and discuss Argentina-U.S. relations. Then, at St. Luke's Mission Center, he, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha helped serve a Thanksgiving meal to individuals and families of the Friendship Place homeless center.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the state funeral of former President Kim Young-sam of South Korea in Seoul, South Korea, on November 26: Mark W. Lippert (head of delegation); and Kathleen Stephens.

The President declared a major disaster in Texas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds, and flooding from October 22 through 31.

November 26

In the morning, the President had separate telephone conversations with U.S. servicemembers representing each branch of the Armed Forces to thank them for their service and wish them a happy Thanksgiving.

November 27

In the evening, the President was notified about the shooting at the Planned Parenthood Colorado Springs Westside center in Colorado Springs, CO, by Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco.

November 28

In the afternoon, in recognition of Small Business Saturday, the President and his daughters Malia and Sasha visited Upshur Street Books, where they purchased books and met with staff and patrons, and Pleasant Pops, where they purchased popsicles and met with staff and patrons.

November 29

In the morning, the President traveled to Paris, France, arriving in the evening. Then, he traveled to the Bataclan concert hall, arriving early the following morning.

During the day, the President posted an entry on his Facebook feed about his travel to Paris, expressing continued U.S. support for France in the wake of the recent terrorist attacks, and the administration's commitment to achieving the goals of the U.N. Climate Change Conference.

November 30

In the early morning, at the Bataclan concert hall in Paris, France, the President laid a rose at a memorial display for the victims of the November 13 terrorist attacks in Paris. He was joined by President François Hollande of France and Mayor Anne Hildago of Paris. Then, he traveled to the U.S. Ambassador's residence.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Le Bourget, France, where, in La Seine Plenary Hall at the Parc des Expositions, he participated in the opening ceremony of the U.N. Climate Change Conference. Then, at the Parc des Expositions, the President participated in a family photograph with leaders of nations participating in the U.N. Climate Change Conference.

In the afternoon, at the Parc des Expositions, the President attended a lunch hosted by President François Hollande of France. Later, he returned to the U.S. Ambassador's residence in Paris.

During the day, at the Parc des Expositions, on the margins of the U.N. Climate Change Conference, the President met with President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia to discuss the situations in Syria and Ukraine. President Obama expressed his regret for the death of a crewmember in the downing of a Russian military aircraft by Turkey, reiterated U.S. support for the deescalation of tensions between Russia and Turkey, and stressed the need for President Bashar al-Asad of Syria to leave power and the imperative of focusing military efforts against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. President Obama also emphasized the importance of working toward a diplomatic solution to the crisis in eastern Ukraine and noted that following full implementation of the Minsk agreement, international and U.S. sanctions against Russia could be rolled back.

In the evening, the President traveled to Paris, where, at L'Ambroisie restaurant, he attended a working dinner with President Hollande. Later, he returned to the U.S. Ambassador's residence, where he remained overnight.

The President announced the nomination of Steven N. Berk and Elizabeth Carroll Wingo to be judges on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

December 1

In the morning, the President traveled to Issy-les-Moulineaux, France, where, at the OECD Development Centre, he met with U.S. Embassy personnel and their families.

In the afternoon, at the OECD Development Centre, he participated in a family photograph with President Anote Tong of Kiribati, President Christopher Jorebon Loeak of the Marshall Islands, Prime Minister Peter Paire O'Neill of Papua New Guinea, Prime Minister Kenny Anthony of Saint Lucia, and Prime Minister Freundel Stuart of Barbados. Later, also at the OECD Development Centre, he recorded a television interview with Laurence Haïm of France's CANAL+/iTELE television network for later broadcast.

Later in the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

December 2

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, the President was briefed by Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco on the shooting at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, CA. Then, in the Roosevelt and Cabinet Rooms, he recorded an interview

with Norah O'Donnell of CBS News for later broadcast.

December 3

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Cabinet Room, the President met with a bipartisan group of Senators and Representatives to discuss criminal justice reform legislation. Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch, Deputy Attorney General Sally Quillian Yates, Senior Adviser Valerie B. Jarrett, White House Counsel W. Neil Eggleston, Domestic Policy Council Director Cecilia Muñoz, and Cabinet Secretary Broderick D. Johnson also attended. Prior to the meeting, Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James B. Comey, Jr., briefed the group on the December 2 shooting at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, CA.

Also in the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Mayor R. Carey Davis of San Bernardino, CA, to discuss the shooting.

In the afternoon, in the East Room, the President met with departing White House interns and participated in a question-and-answer session.

The President announced his intention to nominate Marcela Escobari to be Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean at the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The President announced his intention to nominate Charlotte Power Kessler and Esperanza Spalding to be members of the National Council on the Arts.

The President announced the appointment of Tom A. Bernstein as Chairperson of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

The President announced the appointment of Allan M. Holt as Vice Chairperson of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

December 4

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom to discuss the British Parliament's decision to authorize airstrikes against Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization targets in Syria and United Kingdom-U.S. counterterrorism cooperation. The President also accepted the Prime Minister's condolences for the loss of life in the December 2 shooting at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, CA.

Also in the morning, the President was briefed on the shooting in San Bernardino.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with former Rep. Gabrielle D. Giffords and her husband Mark E. Kelly to discuss ways to reduce gun violence. White House Senior Adviser Valerie B. Jarrett also attended.

December 5

In the morning, in the Situation Room, the President received an update from Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James B. Comey, Jr., Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch, Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh C. Johnson, and members of his national security team on the ongoing investigation into the December 2 shooting at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, CA, potential evidence of radicalization on the part of suspected perpetrators Tashfeen Malik and Syed Rizwan Farook, and the FBI's efforts to coordinate with State and local law enforcement to pursue every angle of the inquiry. Vice President Joe Biden participated via video teleconference.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President François Hollande of France to discuss the shooting in San Bernardino, CA, accept President Hollande's condolences for the loss of life in the attack, update President Hollande on the latest details of the investigation, and pledge continued France-U.S. cooperation in the fight against terrorism. They also discussed negotiations underway at the U.N. Climate Conference in Paris, France.

The White House announced the cancellation of the President's scheduled attendance at the 2015 Kennedy Center Honors Gala at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts on December 6.

The White House announced that the President will address the Nation on the shooting in San Bernardino, CA, operations to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, and ongoing efforts to counter terrorist threats at home and abroad on December 6.

The White House announced that the President will attend the 2015 Kennedy Center Honors Gala at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts following his Oval Office address to the Nation on December 6.

December 6

In the evening, at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the President and Mrs. Obama attended the 2015 Kennedy Center Honors Gala.

December 7

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Then, in the Cabinet Room, he met with the Ambassadors to the United Nations of the 15 current U.N. Security Council members along with those of the 5 countries whose 2-year elected terms on the Council would begin in January 2016 to discuss efforts to promote peace and security for people around the world, including strengthening human rights, reducing the impact of infectious diseases, and combating international terrorism. U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Samantha Power and National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice also attended.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President had lunch with former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. Then, in the Oval Office, he recorded an interview with comedian Jerry Seinfeld of the online series "Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee" for later broadcast. Later, he had a telephone conversation with President Dilma Vana Rousseff of Brazil to discuss ongoing progress in the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Paris, France, and their joint commitment to reaching an ambitious climate change agreement.

In the evening, on the State Floor, the President and Mrs. Obama hosted the Congressional Ball.

December 8

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India to discuss the ongoing U.N. Climate Change Conference in Paris, France, and emphasize their joint interest in securing a strong climate change agreement. The President accepted the Prime Minister's condolences for the loss of life in the December 2 terrorist attack San Bernardino, CA.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter. Later, at the Jefferson Washington, DC hotel, he attended a Democratic National Committee roundtable fundraiser.

December 9

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President posted a comment to a Humans of New York Facebook entry welcoming Syrian refugee Refaai Hamo, who had resettled in Detroit, MI.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the Inauguration of Mauricio Macri as President of Argentina in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on December 10: Anthony R. Foxx (head of delegation); Noah Mamet; and Roberta S. Jacobson.

The White House announced that the President will deliver remarks and sign the Every Student Succeeds Act on December 10.

December 10

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President François Hollande of France to discuss the status of the ongoing negotiations at the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Paris, France, and underscore their firm commitment to reaching an ambitious and durable climate change agreement. President Obama also thanked President Hollande for deploying the aircraft carrier *Charles de Gaulle* to the Persian Gulf to undertake naval strike operations to counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

In the afternoon, in the Cabinet Room, the President recorded an interview with Olivier Knox of Yahoo! News for later broadcast.

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with President Xi Jinping of China to discuss coordinated efforts at the ongoing U.N. Climate Change Conference in Paris, France, and their joint commitment to achieving an ambitious climate agreement.

The President announced his intention to nominate Andrew Mayock to be Deputy Director for Management at the Office of Management and Budget.

The President announced his intention to nominate Edith Ramirez to be a Commissioner and Chair of the Federal Trade Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Alan J. Kreczko and James R. White to be members of the Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint John F. Kirby as Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs at the Department of State.

December 11

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch.

The White House announced that the President will deliver remarks during a naturalization ceremony at the National Archives and Records Administration on December 15.

December 12

During the day, the President posted an entry to his Facebook feed announcing the adoption of the Paris Agreement by all nations participating in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris, France.

December 13

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with President Xi Jinping of China to express his appreciation for the important role China played in securing the climate agreement at the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Paris, France, on December 12, review the contributions made by their joint announcement of climate targets in November 2014 and joint statement on climate in September 2015, and pledge the close coordination of their negotiating teams in Paris toward securing the agreement.

December 14

In the morning, the President traveled to Arlington, VA, where, in Meeting Room 869 at the Pentagon, he had a meeting with the National Security Council to discuss the campaign to counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Vice President Joe Biden also attended.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Also in the afternoon, he posted an entry to his Facebook feed commemorating the third anniversary of the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT, on December 14, 2012.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President François Hollande of France to thank and congratulate him and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development Laurent Fabius for their leadership in achieving the historic multilateral agreement reached at the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Paris, France, on December 12 and discuss joint efforts toward implementation of the agreement. He also had a telephone conversation with President Dilma Vana Rousseff of Brazil to thank and congratulate her and Minister of the Environment Izabella Teixeira for the successful Paris agreement and Brazil's important role in achieving a comprehensive climate implementation plan.

Also during the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations to thank him for his leadership in achieving the historic U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change agreement in Paris, underscore their joint commitment to implementing the agreement, and discuss the deteriorating situation in Burundi and the urgent need to begin internationally mediated dialogue.

December 15

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had lunch. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, the President participated in an off-the-record interview with several news columnists, including David Ignatius of the Washington Post.

During the day, the President was informed of the decision by the Los Angeles Unified School District to close all public schools for the day in response to a bomb threat received by members of the Los Angeles Board of Education.

Also during the day, in the Oval Office, the President met with Sen. Bernard Sanders.

December 16

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India to thank him for his vision and leadership in achieving the climate agreement at the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Paris, France, on December 12, underscore the importance of implementing the agreement, including through the Mission Innovation initiative, and discuss close and strong India-U.S. cooperation on a range of issues.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with former Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York City to discuss efforts to prevent gun violence and thank Mayor Bloomberg for his leadership as U.N. Special Envoy for Cities and Climate in helping to achieve the historic U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change agreement in Paris. White House Senior Adviser Valerie B. Jarrett also attended. Later, also in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of State John F. Kerry.

The White House announced that the President will travel to San Bernardino, CA, en route to Honolulu, HI, on December 18

The President announced his intention to appoint Marie Greene as a member of the Arctic Research Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Panel of Arbitrators of the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes:

Joan Donoghue;
Paolo Di Rosa;
David Huebner;
Rosemary Barkett;
Lucinda A. Low; and
Pedro Martinez-Fraga.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking:

Evelyn Chumbow;
Harold d'Souza;
Minh Dang;
Tina Frundt;
Ima Matul Maisaroh;
Ronny Marty;
Florencia Molina;
Bukola Love Oriola;
Suamhirs Piraino-Guzman;
Sheila White; and
Shandra Woworuntu.

The President announced the nomination of Paul L. Abrams to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California.

The President announced the nomination of Suzanne Mitchell and Scott L. Palk to be judges on the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma.

The President announced the nomination of Ronald G. Russell to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Utah.

December 17

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, the President traveled to McLean, VA, where, in Room OP200 of the National Counterterrorism Center, he

received a briefing from his national security team. Vice President Biden also attended.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, in the Cabinet Room, he recorded an interview with Steve Inskeep of NPR's "Morning Edition" program for later broadcast.

The White House announced further details on the President and Mrs. Obama's travel to San Bernardino, CA, on December 18.

The White House announced that the President and the First Family will travel to Honolulu, HI, on December 18.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael O. Johanns to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Adam H. Sterling to be Ambassador to Slovakia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Morton H. Halperin to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Dain Borges, Thavolia Glymph, and Deborah Wong to be members of the National Council on the Humanities.

December 18

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Diplomatic Reception Room, the President participated in a photo opportunity with Gold Star families who were at the White House attending a private screening of "Star Wars: The Force Awakens."

Also in the afternoon, the President made separate telephone calls to Speaker of the House of Representatives Paul D. Ryan, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell, and Senate Minority Leader Harry M. Reid to congratulate them on the passage of H.R. 2029, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016. He also signed the bill into law.

Later in the afternoon, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to San Bernardino, CA, arriving in the evening.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey to discuss the current dispute between Turkey and Iraq over recent Turkish military action in northern Iraq, efforts to deescalate tensions, the need for Turkey to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, and the importance of continued diplomatic efforts between the U.S., Turkey, and Iraq to coordinate military efforts against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization and work toward a broader resolution of the situation in Syria.

Also during the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan of Abu Dhabi, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of the United Arab Emirates, to express appreciation for the United Arab Emirates commitment to an expanded role in international efforts to destroy ISIL, international diplomatic efforts to resolve the situation in Syria, and the urgent need for all parties in Yemen to adhere to the negotiated cease-fire and engage the U.N.-facilitated peace talks as an opportunity to advance a deescalation of the fighting.

In the evening, upon arrival in San Bernardino, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to Indian Springs High School, where, in the library, they visited privately with the families of victims of the terrorist attack at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino on December 2. Then, also at Indian Springs High School, in the Resource Room, he met with local first responders and law enforcement professionals, including individuals who responded to the incident. Later, he, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Honolulu, HI, arriving the following morning.

December 19

In the morning, upon arrival at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, HI, the President, Mrs.

Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to their vacation residence in Kailua, HI.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, HI. Later, he returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, where he remained overnight.

During the day, the President had an intelligence briefing.

December 20

In the morning, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to the Hawaii Nature Center in Honolulu, HI.

In the afternoon, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to their vacation residence in Kailua, HI.

In the evening, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Honolulu. Later, they returned to their vacation residence in Kailua, where they remained overnight.

During the day, the President had an intelligence briefing.

December 21

In the morning, the President traveled to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, HI. Later, he returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, HI.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to the Mid Pacific Country Club. Later, he returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, where he remained overnight.

During the day, the President had an intelligence briefing.

December 22

In the morning, the President traveled to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, HI. Then, he returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, HI. Later, he and Mrs. Obama traveled to Koko Head District Park in Honolulu, HI. Then, they returned to their vacation residence in Kailua, where they remained overnight.

During the day, the President had an intelligence briefing.

December 23

In the morning, the President traveled to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, HI. Then, he returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, HI. Later, he traveled to Kapolei, HI.

In the evening, the President returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, where he remained overnight.

During the day, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President declared a major disaster in Idaho and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the area affected by a severe storm and straight-line winds on November 17.

December 24

In the morning, the President traveled to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, HI. Then, he returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, HI. Later, he and his daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to the Judd Memorial Trail, part of the Honolulu Mauka Trail System in Honolulu, HI.

In the afternoon, the President and his daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Bellows Air Force Station in Waimanalo, HI. Later, they returned to their vacation residence in Kailua.

In the evening, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Honolulu. Later, they returned to their vacation residence in Kailua, where they remained overnight.

During the day, the President had an intelligence briefing.

Also during the day, the President had separate telephone conversations with deployed U.S. servicemembers from each branch of the Armed Forces to thank them for their service and dedication.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the Inauguration of Roch Marc Christian Kaboré as President of Burkina Faso in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on December 29: Linda Thomas-Greenfield

(head of delegation); Tulinabo S. Mushingi; and David M. Rodriguez.

December 25

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, HI, where they visited with U.S. servicemembers and their families.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Obama returned to their vacation in Kailua, HI, where they remained overnight.

During the day, the President had an intelligence briefing.

December 26

In the afternoon, the President traveled Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, HI. Later, he returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, HI, where he remained overnight.

During the day, the President had an intelligence briefing.

December 27

In the morning, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Bellows Air Force Station in Waimanalo, HI.

In the afternoon, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Kailua, HI, where, at Island Snow, they purchased shave ice and greeted customers and staff. Then, they returned to their vacation residence in Kailua. Later, they traveled to Honolulu, HI, arriving in the evening.

In the evening, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha returned to their vacation residence in Kailua, where they remained overnight.

During the day, the President had an intelligence briefing.

December 28

In the morning, the President traveled Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, HI. Then, he returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, HI, where he received an update on the progress made by Iraq's security forces against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization in Ramadi, Iraq. He also had a telephone conversation with Gov. Gregory W. Abbott of Texas to receive an update on the severe winter storms in Texas, offer Federal assistance for recovery efforts, and express his and Mrs. Obama's condolences for the loss of life due to the severe weather that affected the area from December 24 through 27. Later, he traveled to the Mid Pacific Country Club.

In the afternoon, the President returned to his vacation residence in Kailua.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to Honolulu, HI. Later, they returned to their vacation residence in Kailua, where they remained overnight.

During the day, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Justin P.J. Trudeau of Canada to the White House on March 10, 2016.

December 29

In the morning, the President traveled Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, HI. Then, he returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, HI.

In the afternoon, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Hanauma Bay, HI. Later, they returned to their vacation residence in Kailua, where they remained overnight.

During the day, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Juan Manuel Santos Calderon of Colombia to the White House on February 4, 2016.

The President declared a major disaster in Oklahoma and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the areas affected by severe winter storms and flooding from November 27 through 29.

December 30

In the morning, the President traveled to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, HI. Then, he returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, HI. Also in the morning, he had a telephone conversation with Gov. Jeremiah W. "Jay" Nixon of Missouri to receive an update on the State's response to severe

weather, offer Federal support and assistance, and express his and Mrs. Obama's condolences for the loss of life due to major flooding.

In the afternoon, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Mokuleia, HI.

In the evening, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha returned to their vacation residence in Kailua, where they remained overnight.

During the day, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Hannover, Germany, in late April 2016.

December 31

In the morning, the President traveled Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, HI. Then, he returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, HI. Later, he traveled to Honolulu, HI.

In the afternoon, the President returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, arriving in the evening, where he remained overnight.

During the day, the President had an intelligence briefing.

Appendix B—Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted July 8

Mari Carmen Aponte,
of the District of Columbia, to be Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the Organization of American States, with the rank of Ambassador.

Peter William Bodde,
of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Libya.

Brad R. Carson,
of Oklahoma, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, vice Jessica Garfola Wright, resigned.

Mark Philip Cohen,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Merit Systems Protection Board for the term of 7 years expiring March 1, 2021, vice Anne Marie Wagner, term expired.

Anthony G. Collins,
of New York, to be a member of the Advisory Board of the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, vice William L. Wilson.

Catherine Ebert-Gray,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Solomon Islands and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Vanuatu.

Dennis B. Hankins,
of Minnesota, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Guinea.

G. Kathleen Hill,
of Colorado, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Malta.

Elisabeth I. Millard,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Tajikistan.

Submitted July 9

Darlene Michele Soltys,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of 15 years, vice Natalia Combs Greene, retired.

Submitted July 13

Anthony Rosario Coscia,
of New Jersey, to be a Director of the Amtrak Board of Directors for a term of 5 years (reappointment).

Matthew Rhett Jeppson,
of Florida, to be Director of the Mint for a term of 5 years, vice Edmund C. Moy, resigned.

Derek Tai-Ching Kan,
of California, to be a Director of the Amtrak Board of Directors for a term of 5 years, vice Jeffrey R. Moreland, term expired.

John Maeda,
of Massachusetts, to be a member of the National Council on the Arts for a term expiring September 3, 2016 (new position).

Andrew Miller Slavitt,
of Minnesota, to be Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, vice Marilyn B. Tavenner, resigned.

Mary Katherine Wakefield,
of North Dakota, to be Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services, vice William V. Corr, resigned.

Submitted July 16

Susan Coppedge Amato,
of Georgia, to be Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking, with the rank of Ambassador at Large, vice Luis C. de Baca, resigned.

Jessie Hill Roberson,
of Alabama, to be a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the term of 5 years expiring June 30, 2020, vice Jeffery Martin Baran, resigned.

Marc Jonathan Sievers,
of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Sultanate of Oman.

Kenneth Damian Ward,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Executive Service, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as United States Representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

Mark A. Young,
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Central District of California, vice Audrey B. Collins, retired.

Withdrawn July 16

Jessie Hill Roberson,
of Alabama, to be a member of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board for a term expiring October 18, 2018 (reappointment), which was sent to the Senate on February 5, 2015.

Submitted July 21

Kathryn M. Dominguez,
of Michigan, to be a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for the unexpired term of 14 years from February 1, 2004, vice Jeremy C. Stein, resigned.

Leonard Terry Strand,
of South Dakota, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Iowa, vice Mark W. Bennett, retired.

Submitted July 27

Richard Capel Howorth,
of Mississippi, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2020 (reappointment).

Harry K. Thomas, Jr.,
of New York, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Zimbabwe.

Victoria Marie Baecher Wassmer,
of Illinois, to be Under Secretary of Energy, vice Kristina M. Johnson, resigned.

Submitted July 30

Darryl L. DePriest,
of Illinois, to be Chief Counsel for Advocacy, Small Business Administration, vice Winslow Lorenzo Sargeant, resigned.

Eric Drake Eberhard,
of Washington, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation for a term expiring October 6, 2018, vice Bradley Udall, term expired.

John D. Feeley,
of the District of Columbia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Panama.

Robert Porter Jackson,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Ghana.

Derek Tai-Ching Kan,
of California, to be a Director of the Amtrak Board of Directors for a term of 5 years, vice Nancy A. Naples, term expired.

Victoria A. Lipnic,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for a term expiring July 1, 2020 (reappointment).

Michael Herman Michaud,
of Maine, to be Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training, vice Keith Kelly.

Beverly Angela Scott,
of Ohio, to be a member of the National Transportation Safety Board for a term expiring December 31, 2019, vice Mark R. Rosekind, resigned.

Elissa Slotkin,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense, vice Derek H. Chollet, resigned.

John E. Sparks,
of Virginia, to be a Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces for the term of 15 years to expire on the date prescribed by law, vice James Edgar Baker, term expiring.

Michael F. Suarez,
of Virginia, to be a member of the National Council on the Humanities for a term expiring January 26, 2020, vice Dawn Ho Delbanco, term expired.

Susan Paradise Baxter,
of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Pennsylvania, vice Sean J. McLaughlin, resigned.

Inga S. Bernstein,
of Massachusetts, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Massachusetts, vice Douglas P. Woodlock, retired.

Gary Richard Brown,
of New York, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of New York, vice Sandra J. Feuerstein, retired.

Robert John Colville,
of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Pennsylvania, vice Gary L. Lancaster, deceased.

Elizabeth J. Drake,
of Maryland, to be a Judge of the U.S. Court of International Trade, vice Richard K. Eaton, retired.

Jennifer Choe Groves,
of Virginia, to be a Judge of the U.S. Court of International Trade, vice Gregory Wright Carman, retired.

Marilyn Jean Horan,
of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Pennsylvania, vice Terrence F. McVerry, retired.

Gary Stephen Katzmann,
of Massachusetts, to be a Judge of the U.S. Court of International Trade, vice Jane A. Restani, retired.

Dax Eric López,
of Georgia, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia, vice Julie E. Carnes, elevated.

John Milton Younge,
of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, vice Mary A. McLaughlin, retired.

Withdrawn July 30

Earl L. Gay,
of the District of Columbia, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Personnel Management, vice Christine M. Griffin, which was sent to the Senate on January 8, 2015.

Derek Tai-Ching Kan,
of California, to be a Director of the Amtrak Board of Directors for a term of 5 years, vice Jeffrey R. Moreland, term expired, which was sent to the Senate on July 13, 2015.

Submitted August 5

Charles P. Blahous, III,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Federal Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Fund for a term of 4 years (reappointment).

Charles P. Blahous, III,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund and the Federal Disability Insurance Trust Fund for a term of 4 years (reappointment).

Charles P. Blahous, III,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Federal Hospital Insurance Trust Fund for a term of 4 years (reappointment).

Richard Otto Buckius,
of California, to be Deputy Director of the National Science Foundation, vice Cora B. Marrett, resigned.

Thomas F. Scott Darling, III,
of Massachusetts, to be Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, vice Anne S. Ferro, resigned.

Linda I. Etim,
of Wisconsin, to be an Assistant Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, vice Earl W. Gast, resigned.

Laura S. H. Holgate,
of Virginia, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Vienna Office of the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador.

Laura S.H. Holgate,
of Virginia, to be Representative of the United States of America to the International Atomic Energy Agency, with the rank of Ambassador.

Marcel John Lettre, II,
of Maryland, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, vice Michael Vickers, resigned.

Patrick Joseph Murphy,
of Pennsylvania, to be Under Secretary of the Army, vice Brad R. Carson.

Cherry Ann Murray,
of Kansas, to be Director of the Office of Science, Department of Energy, vice William F. Brinkman.

Robert D. Reischauer,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Federal Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Fund for a term of 4 years (reappointment).

Robert D. Reischauer,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund and the Federal Disability Insurance Trust Fund for a term of 4 years (reappointment).

Robert D. Reischauer,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Federal Hospital Insurance Trust Fund for a term of 4 years (reappointment).

Submitted September 8

Clare E. Connors,
of Hawaii, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Hawaii, vice Susan Oki Mollway, retiring.

Stephanie A. Gallagher,
of Maryland, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Maryland, vice William D. Quarles, Jr., retiring.

Edward L. Gilmore,
of Illinois, to be U.S. Marshal for the Northern District of Illinois for the term of 4 years, vice Darryl Keith McPherson, term expired.

Mary S. McElroy,
of Rhode Island, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Rhode Island, vice Mary M. Lisi, retiring.

Submitted September 9

Richard Franklin Boulware II,
of Nevada, to be a member of the U.S. Sentencing Commission for a term expiring October 31, 2019, vice Ketanji Brown Jackson, term expired.

Charles R. Breyer,
of California, to be a member of the U.S. Sentencing Commission for a term expiring October 31, 2021 (reappointment).

Submitted September 10

Cassandra Q. Butts,
of the District of Columbia, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the 70th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Barbara Lee,
of California, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the 70th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Christopher H. Smith,
of New Jersey, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the 70th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Submitted September 15

Rebecca Goodgame Ebinger,
of Iowa, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Iowa, vice James E. Gritzner, retired.

Submitted September 16

Robert McKinnon Califf,
of South Carolina, to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Department of Health and Human Services, vice Margaret A. Hamburg, resigned.

Eduardo Castell,
of New York, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation for a term expiring December 10, 2019, vice Javaid Anwar, term expired.

Steven H. Cohen,
of Illinois, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation for a term expiring December 10, 2019 (reappointment).

John W. Leslie, Jr.,
of Connecticut, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the African Development Foundation for a term expiring September 22, 2019 (reappointment).

Deborah R. Malac,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Uganda.

Vicki Miles-LaGrange,
of Oklahoma, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation for a term expiring December 10, 2015, vice Roger L. Hunt, term expired.

Vicki Miles-LaGrange,
of Oklahoma, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Harry S Truman Scholarship Foundation for a term expiring December 10, 2021 (reappointment).

Catherine Ann Novelli,
of Virginia, to be U.S. Alternate Governor of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, vice Robert D. Hormats, resigned.

Lisa J. Peterson,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Swaziland.

H. Dean Pittman,
of the District of Columbia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Mozambique.

Linda A. Puchala,
of Maryland, to be a member of the National Mediation Board for a term expiring July 1, 2018 (reappointment).

Eric Seth Rubin,
of New York, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Bulgaria.

Kyle R. Scott,
of Arizona, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Serbia.

Submitted September 21

Ricardo A. Aguilera,
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, vice Lisa S. Disbrow.

Janine Anne Davidson,
of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of the Navy, vice Robert O. Work, resigned.

Lisa S. Disbrow,
of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of the Air Force, vice Eric K. Fanning, resigned.

Eric K. Fanning,
of the District of Columbia, to be Secretary of the Army, vice John M. McHugh.

Shoshana Miriam Lew,
of the District of Columbia, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Transportation, vice Sylvia I. Garcia, resigned.

Jennifer M. O'Connor,
of Maryland, to be General Counsel of the Department of Defense, vice Stephen Woolman Preston, resigned.

Thomas A. Shannon, Jr.,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of career Ambassador, to be an Under Secretary of State (Political Affairs), vice Wendy Ruth Sherman.

Submitted October 5

Todd C. Chapman,
of Texas, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Ecuador.

Steven Michael Haro,
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce, vice Margaret Louise Cummisky, resigned.

John Francis Kotek,
of Idaho, to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy (Nuclear Energy), vice Peter Bruce Lyons, resigned.

Carolyn N. Lerner,
of Maryland, to be Special Counsel, Office of Special Counsel, for the term of 5 years (reappointment).

Matthew John Matthews,
of Oregon, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as U.S. Senior Official for the Asia-Pacific Economic Corporation (APEC) Forum.

Michael Joseph Missal,
of Maryland, to be Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs, vice George J. Opfer, resigned.

Withdrawn October 5

Beverly Angela Scott,
of Ohio, to be a member of the National Transportation Safety Board for a term expiring December 31, 2019, vice Mark R. Rosekind, resigned, which was sent to the Senate on July 30, 2015.

Submitted October 8

Dana J. Boente,
of Virginia, to be U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia for the term of 4 years, vice Neil H. MacBride, resigned.

Robert Lloyd Capers,
of New York, to be U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York for the term of 4 years, vice Loretta E. Lynch, resigned.

John P. Fishwick, Jr.,
of Virginia, to be U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Virginia for the term of 4 years, vice Timothy J. Heaphy, resigned.

Channing D. Phillips,
of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia for the term of 4 years, vice Ronald C. Machen, Jr., resigned.

Emily Gray Rice,
of New Hampshire, to be U.S. Attorney for the District of New Hampshire for the term of 4 years, vice John P. Kacavas, resigned.

Randolph J. Seiler,
of South Dakota, to be U.S. Attorney for the District of South Dakota for the term of 4 years, vice Brendan V. Johnson, resigned.

Amos J. Hochstein,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Energy Resources), vice John Stern Wolf.

David McKean,
of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Luxembourg.

Submitted October 21

Linda I. Etim,
of Wisconsin, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the African Development Foundation for a term expiring September 22, 2021, vice Mimi E. Alemayehou, term expired.

Lisa M. Fairfax,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Securities and Exchange Commission for a term expiring June 5, 2020, vice Luis Aguilar, term expired.

Jean Elizabeth Manes,
of Florida, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of El Salvador.

Scot Alan Marciel,
of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Union of Burma.

Hester Maria Peirce,
of Ohio, to be a member of the Securities and Exchange Commission for the remainder of the term expiring June 5, 2016, vice Daniel M. Gallagher, Jr., resigned.

Linda Swartz Taglialatela,
of New York, a career member of the Senior Executive Service, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Barbados, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Submitted November 9

Robert Annan Riley III,
of Florida, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Federated States of Micronesia.

Karen Bevard Stewart,
of Florida, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Vik Edwin Stoll,
of Missouri, to be a Judge of the U.S. Tax Court for a term of 15 years, vice James S. Halpern, retired.

Withdrawn November 9

Kenneth J. Kopocis,
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, vice Peter Silva Silva, resigned, which was sent to the Senate on June 24, 2015.

Submitted November 10

Beth F. Cobert,
of California, to be Director of the Office of Personnel Management for a term of 4 years, vice Katherine Archuleta, resigned.

Submitted November 16

Hester Maria Peirce,
of Ohio, to be a member of the Securities and Exchange Commission for a term expiring June 5, 2021 (reappointment).

Submitted November 19

Phillip H. Cullom,
of Illinois, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense, vice Sharon E. Burke, resigned.

Swati A. Dandekar,
of Iowa, to be U.S. Director of the Asian Development Bank, with the rank of Ambassador, vice Robert M. Orr, resigning.

Harry R. Hoglander,
of Massachusetts, to be a member of the National Mediation Board for a term expiring July 1, 2017 (reappointment).

Daniel B. Maffei,
of New York, to be a Federal Maritime Commissioner for a term expiring June 30, 2017, vice Richard A. Lidinsky, Jr., resigned.

Georgette Mosbacher,
of New York, to be a member of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy for a term expiring July 1, 2018, vice Lezlee J. Westine, term expired.

Patrick Pizzella,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority for a term of 5 years expiring July 1, 2020 (reappointment).

Submitted November 30

Steven Nathan Berk,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of 15 years, vice Harold L. Cushenberry, Jr., retiring.

Elizabeth Carroll Wingo,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of 15 years, vice Ann O'Regan Keary, resigned.

Submitted December 7

Marcela Escobari,
of Massachusetts, to be an Assistant Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, vice Mark Feierstein, resigned.

Charlotte P. Kessler,
of Ohio, to be a member of the National Council on the Arts for a term expiring September 3, 2018 (reappointment).

Esperanza Emily Spalding,
of Oregon, to be a member of the National Council on the Arts for a term expiring September 3, 2020, vice Lee Greenwood, term expired.

Submitted December 14

Alan J. Kreczko,
of Connecticut, to be a member of the Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board for a term expiring September 14, 2019, vice Paul Cherecwich, Jr., resigned.

Andrew Mayock,
of Illinois, to be Deputy Director for Management, Office of Management and Budget, vice Beth F. Cobert.

Edith Ramirez,
of California, to be a Federal Trade Commissioner for the term of 7 years from September 26, 2015 (reappointment).

James R. White,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board for a term expiring September 14, 2020, vice Nancy Killefer, term expired.

Submitted December 16

Paul Lewis Abrams,
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Central District of California, vice Dean D. Pregerson, retired.

Suzanne Mitchell,
of Oklahoma, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma, vice David L. Russell, retired.

Scott L. Palk,
of Oklahoma, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma, vice Stephen P. Friot, retired.

Ronald G. Russell,
of Utah, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Utah, vice Brian Theadore Stewart, retired.

Submitted December 18

Dain Borges,
of Puerto Rico, to be a member of the National Council on the Humanities for a term expiring January 26, 2020, vice Marvin Krislov, term expired.

Thavolia Glymph,
of North Carolina, to be a member of the National Council on the Humanities for a term expiring January 26, 2020, vice Rolena Klahn Adorno, term expired.

Morton H. Halperin,
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation for a term of 2 years (reappointment).

Michael O. Johanns,
of Nebraska, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation for a term of 3 years, vice Lorne W. Craner, term expired.

Adam H. Sterling,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Slovak Republic.

Deborah Wong,
of California, to be a member of the National Council on the Humanities for a term expiring January 26, 2020, vice Adele Logan Alexander, term expired.

Withdrawn December 18

Adewale Adeyemo,
of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, vice Marisa Logo, which was sent to the Senate on January 16, 2015.

Appendix C—Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

July 1

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Honors Outstanding Mathematics and Science Teachers

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the terrorist attacks in Egypt

Text of the English and Spanish versions of a June 30 letter from President Raúl Castro Ruz of Cuba to President Obama on the reestablishment of diplomatic relations and permanent diplomatic missions in the U.S. and Cuba

July 2

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric H. Schultz

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers member Betsey A. Stevenson on the employment situation in June

July 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 533, H.R. 615, and H.R. 893

White House report: Giving Every Child a Fair Shot

July 7

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Fact sheet: Administration Announces New Initiative To Increase Solar Access for All Americans

July 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text: Precision Medicine Initiative: Proposed Privacy and Trust Principles

Fact sheet: New Patient-Focused Commitments To Advance the President's Precision Medicine Initiative

Fact sheet: White House Tribal Youth Gathering (embargoed until July 9)

July 9

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on South Sudan Independence Day

Fact sheet: Convening Manufacturing Leaders To Strengthen the Innovative Capabilities of the U.S. Supply Chain, Including Small Manufacturers

Fact sheet: Administration Cybersecurity Efforts 2015

July 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Fact sheet: President Obama Designates New National Monuments

July 13

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Grants Commutations

July 14

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Transcript of a background conference call by senior administration officials on the Joint

Comprehensive Plan of Action to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon

Text: Key Excerpts of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)

Fact sheet: Enhancing the Fairness and Effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System

July 15

Text of a Council of Economic Advisers issue brief: Mapping the Digital Divide

Fact sheet: ConnectHome: Coming Together To Ensure Digital Opportunity for All Americans

Fact sheet: Financing for Development—U.S. Government Development Priorities

July 16

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric H. Schultz

July 17

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Transcript of a teleconference press briefing by National Security Council Senior Director Grant T. Harris to preview the upcoming visit of President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria

July 18

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the terrorist attack in Diyala Province, Iraq

July 20

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary on the opening of the U.S. Embassy in Havana, Cuba, and the opening of the Cuban Embassy in Washington, DC

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 91, H.R. 728, H.R. 891, H.R. 1326, H.R. 1350, H.R. 2620, and S. 179

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the terrorist attack in Suruç, Turkey

Fact sheet: Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the ADA

July 21

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Fact sheet: President Obama Announces Final Rules To Better Protect Service Members From Financial Abuse on Fifth Anniversary of Signing Wall Street Reform Into Law

July 22

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

July 23

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

July 24

Statement by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on the death of Djibouti's Ambassador to the U.S. Roble Olhaye Oudine

July 25

Fact sheet: U.S. Investment in Entrepreneurship

Fact sheet: Power Africa

July 26

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Transcript of a background press briefing by senior administration officials

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the terrorist attack in Mogadishu, Somalia

Fact sheet: Deepening the U.S.-Africa Trade Relationship

Fact sheet: Advancing Democracy, Human Rights, Gender Equality, Wildlife Conservation, and Governance in Africa

July 27

Fact sheet: U.S. Support for Peace, Security, and Countering Violent Extremism in Africa

Fact sheet: White House Launches American Business Act on Climate Pledge

July 28

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 2499

Text of a White House blog post by National Economic Council Director Jeffrey D. Zients and Council of Economic Advisers member Betsey A. Stevenson: Trends in Occupational Licensing and Best Practices for Smart Labor Market Regulation

Text of a report by the Department of the Treasury Office of Economic Policy, the Council of Economic Advisers, and the Department of Labor: Occupational Licensing: A Framework for Policymakers

Fact sheet: Partnering With Africa on Food Security and Climate Change Adaptation

Fact sheet: The Global Health Security Agenda

July 29

Transcript of a press briefing by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric H. Schultz

July 30

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 971 and S. 984

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the advance estimate of GDP for the second quarter of 2015

Text: The National HIV/AIDS Strategy for the United States: Updated to 2020

Fact sheet: The National HIV/AIDS Strategy: Updated to 2020

July 31

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest and Secretary of Energy Ernest J. Moniz

Statement by the Press Secretary on the death of former Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar of Afghanistan

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 3236

August 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Fact sheet: President Obama To Announce Historic Carbon Pollution Standards for Power Plants

August 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary: New Details: President Obama Hosts First-Ever White House Demo Day

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with Director General Yukiya Amano of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Fact sheet: President Obama Announces New Commitments From Investors, Companies, Universities, and Cities To Advance Inclusive Entrepreneurship at First-Ever White House Demo Day

August 5

Statement by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on the nomination of Laura S.H. Holgate to be Ambassador and U.S. Representative to the Vienna Office of the U.N. and the International Atomic Energy Agency

Text: Best Practices for Business Schools To Lead in Expanding Opportunities for Women in Business and To Adapt to the 21st-Century Workforce

Text of a Council of Economic Advisers issue brief: Expanding Opportunities for Women in Business

Fact sheet: White House Hosts Convening of Business School Deans and the Business

Community on Expanding Opportunities for Women in Business

August 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 876, H.R. 1626, and S. 1482

August 7

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1138

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 212, H.R. 1531, H.R. 2131, and H.R. 2559

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the employment situation in July

August 8

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the terrorist attacks in Mali and Saudi Arabia

Text of a readout of calls between National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice and President Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai of Afghanistan and Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco and National Security Adviser Mohammad Hanif Atmar of Afghanistan

August 10

Statement by the Press Secretary on the 2016 Nuclear Security Summit

August 12

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Announces Summit on Worker Voice

Text of a blog post by Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez: Stronger Together: Your Voice in the Workplace Matters (released by the Department of Labor)

August 13

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the explosions in Tianjin, China

August 14

Statement by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric H. Schultz on the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia ruling in *Joseph M. Arpaio* v. *Barack Obama, et al.*

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan's statement on the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco's meeting with Deputy National Security Adviser Arvind Gupta of India

Text of a joint statement: 2015 United States-India Cyber Dialogue

August 17

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on airstrikes conducted by Syrian Government forces in Douma, Syria

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the bombing in Bangkok, Thailand

Text of an Office of National Drug Control Policy press release: White House Drug Policy Office Funds New Projects in High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas

Fact sheet: President Obama Signs Executive Order Making Presidential Innovation Fellows Program Permanent

August 18

Statement by the National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on the peace agreement in South Sudan

August 19

Fact sheet: President Obama To Commemorate 10th Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina

August 21

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the death of Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization deputy leader Fadhil Ahmad al-Hayali

August 24

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Appoints 2015–2016 Class of White House Fellows

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the U.N. Security Council's discussion of the protection of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons targeted by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization

Text: Accelerating the Transition to Clean Energy

Fact sheet: President Obama Announces New Actions To Bring Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency to Households Across the Country

August 25

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric H. Schultz

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's travel to China

August 26

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the International Atomic Energy Agency's Low Enriched Uranium Bank

Statement by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on the South Sudan peace agreement

August 27

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the second estimate of GDP for the second quarter of 2015

August 28

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Fact sheet: Obama Administration Announces New Flexible Hybrid Electronics Manufacturing Innovation Hub in San Jose, CA

August 29

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meetings in Beijing, China

August 30

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's travel to Islamabad, Pakistan

Fact sheet: President Obama To Announce New Steps To Enhance Administration Collaboration With Alaska Natives, the State of Alaska, and Local Communities

August 31

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

September 1

Statement by the Press Secretary on Alaska's expansion of Medicaid under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the Ukrainian Parliament's vote on amendments on decentralization

Fact sheet: The "It's On Us" Campaign Launches New PSA, Marks One Year Since Launch of "It's On Us" Campaign To End Campus Sexual Assault

Fact sheet: President Obama Announces New Investments To Enhance Safety and Security in the Changing Arctic

September 2

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Transcript of a press call by Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes and National Security Council Senior Director for the Middle East Jeffrey Prescott on the upcoming visit of King Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia

Text: Climate Resilience in Alaskan Communities: Catalog of Federal Programs (released by the Coastal Erosion Working Group of the Arctic Executive Steering Committee)

Fact sheet: President Obama Announces New Investments To Combat Climate Change and Assist Remote Alaskan Communities

September 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

September 4

Statement by the Press Secretary on Senior Adviser to the President Brian C. Deese's travel to New Delhi, India, and Beijing, China

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the employment situation in August

September 7

Fact sheet: Helping Middle-Class Families Get Ahead by Expanding Paid Sick Leave

September 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text of a White House and Department of Labor report: Progress Update on Job Driven Training and Apprenticeships

Fact sheet: The Equal Futures Partnership—Progress To Expand Women's Economic and Political Participation and Enhance Information Sharing and Lessons Learned

September 9

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Eric H. Schultz

Fact sheet: Providing More Americans With Affordable Access to Education and Job Training Opportunities To Help Grow the Middle Class

September 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price announcing that the USNS *Comfort* will visit Haiti on September 10 for a tour of the ship by Cuba's Ambassador to Haiti and Cuban medical workers

September 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the conviction and sentencing of Leopoldo López in Venezuela

September 12

Text of a White House Council of Economic Advisers report: Using Federal Data To Measure and Improve the Performance of U.S. Institutions of Higher Education

Text of a Department of Education report: Better Information for Better College Choice and Institutional Performance

Text of a readout of senior administration officials' meeting with Communist Party Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission Secretary Meng Jianzhu of China

Fact sheet: Empowering Students To Choose the College That Is Right for Them

September 13

Fact sheet: The President's Plan for Early Financial Aid: Improving College Choice and Helping More Americans Pay for College

September 14

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text of a memorandum for the heads of executive departments and agencies from Office of

Management and Budget Director Shaun L.S. Donavan and Office of Science and Technology Policy Director John P. Holdren on multiagency science and technology priorities for the fiscal year 2017 budget (dated July 9)

Text of a letter from university presidents and mayors to President Obama on the creation of a MetroLab Network to improve city infrastructure and services

Text of a Networking and Information Technology Research and Development Program working document: Smart Cities and Connected Communities Framework (dated September 21)

Fact sheet: Administration Announces New "Smart Cities" Initiative To Help Communities Tackle Local Challenges and Improve City Services

September 15

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text: U.S.-China Climate Leaders' Declaration

Text of a National Science and Technology Council report: Social and Behavioral Sciences Team Annual Report

Fact sheet: U.S.-China Climate Leaders Summit

Fact sheet: President Obama Signs Executive Order; White House Announces New Steps To Improve Federal Programs by Leveraging Research Insights

September 16

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on additional U.S. humanitarian aid for Yemen

Text of a White House blog post by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman, Member Sandra E. Black, and Chief Economist Matthew A. Fiedler: Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance in the United States in 2014

Fact sheet: Continuing To Drive Growth in Solar Energy Across the Country

September 17

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Transcript of a teleconference press briefing by Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes, National Security Council Senior Director for European Affairs Charles A. Kupchan, and White House Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships Executive Director Melissa Rogers previewing the visit of Pope Francis

Statement by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on the situation in Burkina Faso

Text: Building Welcoming Communities Campaign (released by the White House Task Force on new Americans)

Fact sheet: "Stand Stronger" Citizenship Awareness Campaign

September 18

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text of a Department of the Treasury press release: Treasury and Commerce Announce Further Amendments to the Cuba Sanctions Regulations

September 20

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the release of two U.S. citizens detained in Yemen

September 21

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text of a Department of State fact sheet: New U.S. Humanitarian Assistance To Respond to Syria Crisis

September 22

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Transcript of an on-the-record conference call by Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes, Deputy National Security Adviser for International

Economics Caroline M. Atkinson, and National Security Council Senior Director for Asian Affairs Daniel J. Kritenbrink to preview the visit of President Xi Jinping of China

Text of a readout of National Security Advisor Susan E. Rice's meeting with civil society leaders on China's draft law regulating foreign nongovernmental organizations

September 23

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Fact sheet: Advancing Shared Values for a Better World

Advance text of the President's remarks at a welcoming ceremony for Pope Francis

September 24

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Transcript of press call by Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes, National Security Council Senior Director for Multilateral Affairs Stephen E. Pomper, and National Security Council Senior Director for Russia Celeste A. Wallander on the U.N. General Assembly

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Colombia peace process

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 720 and S. 1359

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the stampede in Mina, Saudi Arabia

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on U.S. support for nations combating the Boko Haram terrorist organization

September 25

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the third estimate of GDP for the second quarter of 2015

Text: Memorandum of Understanding on U.S.-China Development Cooperation and the Establishment of an Exchange and Communication Mechanism Between the United States Agency for International Development and the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China (released by the U.S. Agency for International Development)

Fact sheet: President Xi Jinping's State Visit to the United States

Fact sheet: The United States and China Issue Joint Presidential Statement on Climate Change With New Domestic Policy Commitments and a Common Vision for an Ambitious Global Climate Agreement in Paris

Fact sheet: U.S.-China Economic Relations

September 26

Statement by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on new President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief targets

Statement by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on the situation in Burkina Faso

September 27

Fact sheet: Sustainable Development Summit

Fact sheet: Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Fact sheet: U.S. Global Development Policy and Agenda 2030

Fact sheet: 2015 United Nations General Assembly (released by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief)

September 28

Text of a readout of Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco's meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs Feridun Hadi Sinirlioglu of Turkey

Fact sheet: U.S. Support to Peace Operations 2015 Leaders' Summit on U.N. Peacekeeping

September 29

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text of a readout of Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco's meeting with Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah of Afghanistan

Fact sheet: Leaders' Summit To Counter ISIL and Violent Extremism

Fact sheet: U.S. Support for Civil Society

September 30

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary on congressional passage of H.R. 719

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 23, H.R. 719, H.R. 2051, H.R. 3614, S. 230, S. 501, and S. 2082

October 1

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

October 2

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the employment situation in September

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on reports of civilian deaths in Mokha, Yemen, on September 28

October 5

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Fact sheet: Preserving and Protecting Oceans and America's Waterways for Future Generations

Fact sheet: How the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Boosts Made in America Exports, Supports Higher-Paying American Jobs, and Protects American Workers

October 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Fact sheet: Bystander: "Stop the Bleed"—Broad Private Sector Support for Effort To Save Lives and Build Resilience

October 7

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1020, H.R. 1624, H.R. 2617, S. 136, S. 139, S. 261, S. 565, S. 994, and S. 1707

Fact sheet: Administration Celebrates Five-Year Anniversary of Challenge.gov With Launch of More Than 20 New Public- and Private-Sector Prizes

October 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text of a U.S. Trade Representative press release: New USTR Report: "18,000 Tax Cuts on Made-in-America Exports"

October 9

Transcript of a press call by Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Christine E. Wormuth, and Deputy Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition To Counter ISIL Brett H. McGurk on the campaign to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization

October 10

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the terrorist attack in Ankara, Turkey

October 13

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the Dutch Safety Board report on the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17

October 14

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes's travel to Laos and Burma

October 15

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Transcript of an on-the-record conference call by senior administration officials on Afghanistan

Fact sheet: 25 Years of Hispanics Fulfilling America's Future

Fact sheet: Administration Announces New Workforce and Economic Revitalization Resources for Communities Through POWER Initiative

Fact sheet: Obama Administration and Private-Sector Leaders Announce Ambitious Commitments and Robust Progress To Address Potent Greenhouse Gases

October 16

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 2835, S. 986, S. 1300, and S. 2078

Joint fact sheet: The United States-Republic of Korea Alliance: Shared Values, New Frontiers

October 19

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Fact sheet: White House Announces Commitments to the American Business Act on Climate Pledge

Fact sheet: At White House Astronomy Night, President Obama Announces New Private-Sector Commitments To Get Students Excited About Science and Space

Text: White House Astronomy Night Activities and Exhibits

October 20

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

October 21

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric H. Schultz

Text of a National Economic Council and Office of Science and Technology Policy report: A Strategy for American Innovation

Fact sheet: Obama Administration Announces Public and Private Sector Efforts To Address Prescription Drug Abuse and Heroin Use

Fact sheet: The White House Releases New Strategy for American Innovation, Announces Areas of Opportunity From Self-Driving Cars to Smart Cities

October 22

Transcript of a press briefing by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric H. Schultz

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 3116

Text of a readout of the President's meeting with Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan

Fact sheet: U.S.-Pakistan Augmented Joint Action Plan for Trade and Investment

Fact sheet: U.S.-Pakistan Clean Energy Partnership

Fact sheet: The United States and Pakistan—Announcing New Partnership To Advance Girls Education

Fact sheet: Obama Administration Joins With Public and Private Sector To Increase Access to Off-Grid Clean Energy and the Deployment of Innovative Technologies Globally

Fact sheet: The United States and Pakistan—A Strong and Enduring Relationship

October 23

Transcript of a press briefing by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric H. Schultz

October 26

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Fact sheet: Obama Administration Announces New Efforts To Promote Sustainable and Climate-Smart Agriculture

Fact sheet: U.S.-Indonesia Energy Cooperation

Fact sheet: U.S.-Indonesia Climate Cooperation

Fact sheet: U.S.-Indonesia Maritime Cooperation

October 27

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric H. Schultz

October 28

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric H. Schultz

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the U.S. delegation for the meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the election of a new Government in Nepal

October 29

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 3819

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the advance estimate of GDP for the third quarter of 2015

Text of a readout of a roundtable discussion by Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco and Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Adviser Avril D. Haines with human rights advocates and legal experts on counterterrorism transparency

October 30

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

November 2

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1314

Statement by the Press Secretary on Montana's expansion of Medicaid under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriate Affairs Nasser Judeh of Jordan

Fact sheet: President Obama Announces New Actions To Promote Rehabilitation and Reintegration for the Formerly-Incarcerated

November 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

November 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text of a White House report: Generation Indigenous: Increasing Support and Opportunity for Native Youth—2015 Update Report (embargoed until November 5)

Fact sheet: The 7th Annual White House Tribal Nations Conference (embargoed until November 5)

November 5

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Transcript of an on-the-record press call by Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes, National Security Coordinator for the Middle East, North Africa, and the Gulf Region Robert Malley, and U.S. Ambassador to Israel Daniel B. Shapiro to preview the visit of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 313, H.R. 322, H.R. 323, H.R. 324, H.R. 558, H.R. 623, H.R. 774, H.R. 1442, H.R. 1884, H.R. 3059, S. 1362, and S. 2162

Statement by the Press Secretary on H.R. 774, the Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing Enforcement Act of 2015

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on

National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with National Security Adviser Yossi Cohen of Israel

November 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Announces "Healthy Communities Challenge"

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the employment situation in October

Fact sheet: Obama Administration Announces Actions To Ensure That Nuclear Energy Remains a Vibrant Component of the United States' Clean Energy Strategy

November 7

Statement by the Press Secretary on Ukrainian Holodomor Remembrance Day

November 8

Statement by the Press Secretary: U.S. Government Announces Continued Commitment to Jordan's Education Sector

November 9

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text: Wildland Fire Science and Technology Task Force Final Report (released by the National Science and Technology Council)

Fact sheet: Administration and Fire Chiefs Around the Country Take Action To Reduce the Risk of Wildfires in the Wildland Urban Interface Exacerbated by Climate Change

November 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary on the death of former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of Germany

Text of an op-ed by President Obama for Bloomberg View: A Trade Deal for Working Families

Fact sheet: Obama Administration Announces More Than $375 Million in Support for Next-Generation High Schools

Advance text of remarks by White House Chief of Staff Denis R. McDonough to the Jewish Federations of North America General Assembly

November 11

Fact sheet: Honoring the Service of Our Nation's Veterans

November 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest, National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice, and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on progress in Liberia and the lifting of economic sanctions

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the terrorist attacks in Beirut, Lebanon

November 13

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text of a White House Council on Women and Girls report: Advancing Equity for Women and Girls of Color

Fact sheet: Advancing Equity for Women and Girls of Color

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Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Names Recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom

Statement by the Press Secretary on Senior Adviser to the President Brian C. Deese's travel to Ottawa, Canada

Fact sheet: The 2015 G–20 Summit in Antalya, Turkey

Fact sheet: The U.S. Commitment to the Global Health Security Agenda

Fact sheet: Advancing the Rebalance to Asia and the Pacific

Advance text of remarks by White House Chief of Staff Denis R. McDonough at the Department of State: Bridging the Education Gap for Refugee Children in Turkey

November 17

Text of a readout of a conference call between White House officials and Governors to discuss U.S. refugee admissions policies and security screening measures

Fact sheet: U.S. Building Maritime Capacity in Southeast Asia

Fact sheet: Administration Announces 68 Cities, States, and Businesses Are Working Together To Increase Access to Solar for All Americans

Fact sheet: White House and Department of Labor Launch $100 Million TechHire Grant Competition Including $50 Million for Young Americans

November 19

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest, U.S. Trade Representative Michael B. Froman, Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes, and National Security Council Senior Director for Asian Affairs Daniel J. Kritenbrink

Fact sheet: 23rd Annual APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting

Fact sheet: Ahead of the Conference on Climate Change, More Than 200 Colleges and Universities Sign the American Campus Act on Climate Pledge To Demonstrate Support for Strong International Climate Action

November 20

Transcript of a weekly address by Vice President Joe Biden (embargoed until November 21)

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 3996

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the terrorist attack in Bamako, Mali

Fact sheet: The President's Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative

November 21

Fact sheet: U.S.-ASEAN Economic Engagement

Fact sheet: U.S.-ASEAN Relations

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Statement by the Press Secretary on the death of former President Kim Young-sam of South Korea

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Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the Executive order blocking property of persons contributing to the situation in Burundi

Fact sheet: Burundi Executive Order

November 24

Transcript of a press call by Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes and National Security Council Senior Director for Energy and Climate Change Paul Bodnar on the President's travel to Paris, France

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the second estimate of GDP for the third quarter of 2015

November 25

Statement by the Press Secretary: Background on the Pardoning of the National Thanksgiving Turkey

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 208, H.R. 639, H.R. 2262, S. 799, S. 1356, and S. 2036

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the terrorist attack in Tunisia

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Fact sheet: Mission Innovation

November 30

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Announces Additional Commitments to the American Business Act on Climate Pledge (embargoed until December 1)

Statement by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on the confirmation of Gayle E. Smith as Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development

Text of a readout of the President's meeting with President Xi Jinping of China

Fact sheet: Visa Waiver Program Enhancements

December 1

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on elections in Burkina Faso

Text of a White House Office of National AIDS Policy report: National HIV/AIDS Strategy Federal Action Plan

Fact sheet: World AIDS Day 2015—The Time To Act Is Now

December 2

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary on House of Representatives passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act

Statement by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on the death of former National Security Adviser Samuel R. "Sandy" Berger

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with State Councilor Guo Shengkun of China

Fact sheet: Congress Acts To Fix No Child Left Behind

December 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

December 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 22

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the employment situation in November

Fact sheet: Health Educators Climate Commitment

December 7

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

December 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text of a Council of Economic Advisers report: Long-Term Benefits of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Fact sheet: Council of Economic Advisers Releases Report Highlighting New Research on SNAP's Effectiveness and the Importance of Adequate Food Assistance

December 9

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text of a readout of the President's meeting with President Reuven Rivlin of Israel

December 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Report: The Every Student Succeeds Act

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 1177

White House report: Every Student Succeeds Act: A Progress Report on Elementary and Secondary Education

Text of an Office of National Drug Control Policy press release: White House Announces Community Forums on Opioid Epidemic

December 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 2250, S. 599, S. 611, and S. 1170

December 12

Fact sheet: U.S. Leadership and the Historic Paris Agreement To Combat Climate Change

December 14

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the Presidential election and Inauguration in Guinea

December 15

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

White House report: Water Resource Challenges and Opportunities for Water Technology Innovation

Text of a Bureau of Reclamation press release: WaterSMART Grant Funding Available for Water Conservation and Energy Efficiency Projects (dated December 14)

Fact sheet: Administration Announces Public-Private Innovation Strategy To Build a Sustainable Water Future

December 16

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.J. Res. 78

Fact sheet: One-Year Anniversary of the President's Policy of Engagement With Cuba

December 17

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

December 18

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Grants Commutations and Pardons

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.J. Res. 76, H.R. 2270, H.R. 2297, H.R. 2693, H.R. 2820, H.R. 3594, H.R. 3831, H.R. 4246, S. 614, S. 808, S. 1090, and S. 1461

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 2029

December 19

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the constitutional referendum in Rwanda

December 21

Statement by the Press Secretary on the deaths of U.S. servicemembers in Afghanistan

December 22

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama To Honor Nation's Leading Scientists and Innovators

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the third estimate of GDP for the third quarter of 2015

White House report: National Action Plan for Combating Multidrug-Resistant Tuberculosis

Fact sheet: Obama Administration Releases National Action Plan for Combating Multidrug-Resistant Tuberculosis

December 28

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1321 and S. 2425

Statement by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on the South Korea-Japan agreement on "Comfort Women"

December 30

Statement by the Press Secretary on the U.S.-ASEAN summit

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Edward C. "Ned" Price on the arrest of journalists in Ethiopia

Appendix D—Presidential Documents Published in the *Federal Register*

This appendix lists Presidential documents released by the Office of the Press Secretary and published in the Federal Register. *The texts of the documents are printed in the* Federal Register *(F.R.) at the citations listed below. The documents are also printed in title 3 of the* Code of Federal Regulations *and in the Compilation of Presidential Documents.*

PROCLAMATIONS

Proc. No.	*Date 2015*	*Subject*	*80 F.R. Page*
9297	July 10	Establishment of the Basin and Range National Monument	41969
9298	July 10	Establishment of the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument	41975
9299	July 10	Establishment of the Waco Mammoth National Monument	41983
9300	July 17	Captive Nations Week, 2015	43299
9301	July 21	Honoring the Victims of the Tragedy in Chattanooga, Tennessee	44249
9302	July 24	Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 2015	45391
9303	July 24	National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day, 2015	45393
9304	July 27	World Hepatitis Day, 2015	45597
9305	July 29	50th Anniversary of Medicare and Medicaid	46175
9306	Aug. 7	National Health Center Week, 2015	48423
9307	Aug. 14	National Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Week, 2015	50541
9308	Aug. 24	Women's Equality Day, 2015	52171
9309	Aug. 31	National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month, 2015	53443
9310	Aug. 31	National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, 2015	53445
9311	Aug. 31	National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, 2015	53447
9312	Aug. 31	National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, 2015	53449
9313	Aug. 31	National Preparedness Month, 2015	53451
9314	Aug. 31	National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, 2015	53453
9315	Aug. 31	National Wilderness Month, 2015	53455
9316	Sept. 4	Labor Day, 2015	54695
9317	Sept. 9	World Suicide Prevention Day, 2015	55215
9318	Sept. 10	National Days of Prayer and Remembrance, 2015	55217
9319	Sept. 10	Patriot Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance, 2015	55219
9320	Sept. 11	National Hispanic-Serving Institutions Week, 2015	55717

PROCLAMATIONS (Continued)

Proc. No.	*Date 2015*	*Subject*	*80 F.R. Page*
9321	Sept. 11	National Grandparents Day, 2015	55719
9322	Sept. 14	National Hispanic Heritage Month, 2015	56363
9323	Sept. 16	Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, Constitution Week, 2015	57067
9324	Sept. 17	National POW/MIA Recognition Day, 2015	57279
9325	Sept. 18	National Farm Safety and Health Week, 2015	57505
9326	Sept. 18	National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week, 2015	57507
9327	Sept. 21	National Voter Registration Day, 2015	57691
9328	Sept. 24	Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day, 2015	58571
9329	Sept. 25	National Hunting and Fishing Day, 2015	59017
9330	Sept. 25	National Public Lands Day, 2015	59019
9331	Sept. 28	National Arts and Humanities Month, 2015	59547
9332	Sept. 29	National Energy Action Month, 2015	60025
9333	Sept. 30	To Modify Duty-Free Treatment Under the Generalized System of Preferences and for Other Purposes	60249
9334	Sept. 30	National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, 2015	60257
9335	Sept. 30	National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, 2015	60259
9336	Sept. 30	National Disability Employment Awareness Month, 2015	60261
9337	Sept. 30	National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, 2015	60263
9338	Sept. 30	National Substance Abuse Prevention Month, 2015	60265
9339	Sept. 30	National Youth Justice Awareness Month, 2015	60267
9340	Oct. 2	Fire Prevention Week, 2015	60787
9341	Oct. 2	Child Health Day, 2015	60789
9342	Oct. 2	Honoring the Victims of the Tragedy in Roseburg, Oregon	60791
9343	Oct. 5	German-American Day, 2015	61085
9344	Oct. 8	Leif Erikson Day, 2015	61973
9345	Oct. 9	National School Lunch Week, 2015	63071
9346	Oct. 9	International Day of the Girl, 2015	63073
9347	Oct. 9	General Pulaski Memorial Day, 2015	63075
9348	Oct. 9	Columbus Day, 2015	63077
9349	Oct. 14	Blind Americans Equality Day, 2015	63407
9350	Oct. 15	Minority Enterprise Development Week, 2015	63887
9351	Oct. 16	National Character Counts Week, 2015	64301
9352	Oct. 16	National Forest Products Week, 2015	64303
9353	Oct. 22	United Nations Day, 2015	65879
9354	Oct. 28	National Adoption Month, 2015	67615
9355	Oct. 28	National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month, 2015	67617
9356	Oct. 28	National College Application Month, 2015	67619

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9358	Oct. 29	Military Family Month, 2015	68239
9359	Oct. 29	National Entrepreneurship Month, 2015	68241
9360	Oct. 30	National Diabetes Month, 2015	68413
9361	Oct. 30	National Family Caregivers Month, 2015	68415
9362	Oct. 30	National Native American Heritage Month, 2015	68417
9363	Oct. 30	National Apprenticeship Week, 2015	68419
9364	Nov. 5	Veterans Day, 2015	69835
9365	Nov. 6	World Freedom Day, 2015	70147
9366	Nov. 13	American Education Week, 2015	72321
9367	Nov. 13	Get Smart About Antibiotics Week, 2015	72323
9368	Nov. 13	America Recycles Day, 2015	72325
9369	Nov. 15	Honoring the Victims of the Attack in Paris, France	72553
9370	Nov. 19	National Child's Day, 2015	73631
9371	Nov. 20	National Family Week, 2015	73939
9372	Nov. 20	Thanksgiving Day, 2015	73941
9373	Nov. 30	National Impaired Driving Prevention Month, 2015	75781
9374	Nov. 30	World AIDS Day, 2015	75783
9375	Dec. 2	Helsinki Human Rights Day, 2015	76197
9376	Dec. 2	International Day of Persons With Disabilities, 2015	76199
9377	Dec. 3	Honoring the Victims of the Attack in San Bernardino, California	76353
9378	Dec. 4	150th Anniversary of the 13th Amendment	76625
9379	Dec. 4	National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, 2015	76627
9380	Dec. 9	Human Rights Day and Human Rights Week, 2015	77565
9381	Dec. 14	Bill of Rights Day, 2015	78957
9382	Dec. 16	Wright Brothers Day, 2015	79457
9383	Dec. 21	To Take Certain Actions Under the African Growth and Opportunity Act and for Other Purposes	80617

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9385	Dec. 31	National Mentoring Month, 2016	713
9386	Dec. 31	National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, 2016	715
9387	Dec. 31	National Stalking Awareness Month, 2016	717

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E.O. No.	*Date 2015*	*Subject*	*80 F.R. Page*
13700	July 15	Establishing an Emergency Board To Investigate Disputes Between New Jersey Transit Rail and Certain of Its Employees Represented by Certain Labor Organizations	43003
13701	July 17	Delegation of Certain Authorities and Assignment of Certain Functions Under the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015	43903
13702	July 29	Creating a National Strategic Computing Initiative	46177
13703	July 30	Implementing the National HIV/AIDS Strategy for the United States for 2015–2020	46181
13704	Aug. 17	Presidential Innovation Fellows Program	50751
13705	Sept. 3	Designating the International Renewable Energy Agency as a Public International Organization Entitled To Enjoy Certain Privileges, Exemptions, and Immunities	54405
13706	Sept. 7	Establishing Paid Sick Leave for Federal Contractors	54697
13707	Sept. 15	Using Behavioral Science Insights To Better Serve the American People	56365
13708	Sept. 30	Continuance or Reestablishment of Certain Federal Advisory Committees	60271
13709	Oct. 2	National Security Medal	60793
13710	Nov. 12	Termination of Emergency With Respect to the Actions and Policies of Former Liberian President Charles Taylor	71679

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13711	Nov. 12	Establishing an Emergency Board To Investigate Disputes Between New Jersey Transit Rail and Certain of Its Employees Represented by Certain Labor Organizations	71923
13712	Nov. 22	Blocking Property of Certain Persons Contributing to the Situation in Burundi	73633
13713	Dec. 11	Half-Day Closing of Executive Departments and Agencies of the Federal Government on Thursday, December 24, 2015	78117
13714	Dec. 15	Strengthening the Senior Executive Service	79225
13715	Dec. 18	Adjustments of Certain Rates of Pay	80195

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2015–9	July 10	Presidential Determination: Designation of the Republic of Tunisia as a Major Non-NATO Ally	43613
	July 17	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Former Liberian Regime of Charles Taylor	43297
	July 17	Memorandum: Delegation of Certain Functions and Authorities Under Section 135 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2011 *et seq.*), as Amended by the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015	43909
	July 21	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Transnational Criminal Organizations	43907
	July 29	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Lebanon	45839
2015–10	Aug. 5	Presidential Determination: Continuation of U.S. Drug Interdiction Assistance to the Government of Colombia	50755
	Aug. 7	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Export Control Regulations	48233
	Aug. 28	Memorandum: Delegation of Authority To Transfer Certain Funds in Accordance With Section 610 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961	55715

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2015–11	Sept. 11	Presidential Determination: Continuation of the Exercise of Certain Authorites Under the Trading With the Enemy Act	55503
2015–12	Sept. 14	Presidential Determination: Presidential Determination on Major Drug Transit or Major Illicit Drug Producing Countries for Fiscal Year 2016	57063
	Sept. 24	Memorandum: Delegation of Authority Under Section 506(a)(1) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961	60511
	Sept. 24	Memorandum: Delegation of Authority Under the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015	61273
	Sept. 29	Memorandum: Delegation of Authority Under Sections 506(a)(1) and 552(c)(2) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961	61275
	Sept. 29	Memorandum: Delegation of Authority Under Section 404(c) of the Child Soldiers Prevention Act of 2008	62429
2015–13	Sept. 29	Presidential Determination: Determination With Respect to the Child Soldiers Prevention Act of 2008	62431
2015–14	Sept. 29	Presidential Determination: Presidential Determination on Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2016	62433
2016–01	Oct. 5	Presidential Determination: Presidential Determination With Respect to Foreign Governments' Efforts Regarding Trafficking in Persons	62435
	Oct. 5	Memorandum: Delegation of Authority Under Sections 110(c) and (d)(4) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000	65605
	Oct. 18	Memorandum: Delegation of Certain Functions and Authorities Under Section 213(b)(1) of the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012	66781
	Oct. 18	Memorandum: Preparing for Implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action of July 14, 2015 (JCPOA)	66783
	Oct. 19	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Significant Narcotics Traffickers Centered in Colombia	63665
	Oct. 20	Memorandum: Delegation of Authority for Drafting and Submission of the International Trade Data System Annual Report to the Congress	64305
	Oct. 21	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Situation in or in Relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo	65119

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	Nov. 3	Memorandum: Mitigating Impacts on Natural Resources From Development and Encouraging Related Private Investment	68743
	Nov. 5	Notice: Notice of Intention To Enter Into the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement	69561
	Nov. 10	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Iran	70663
	Nov. 12	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction	70667
2016–02	Nov. 13	Presidential Determination: Distribution of Department of Defense Funded Humanitarian Assistance in Syria	71927
2016–03	Nov. 18	Presidential Determination: Presidential Determination Pursuant to Section 1245(d)(4)(B) and (C) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012.	75921
	Dec. 2	Memorandum: Delegation of Reporting Functions Specified in Section 941 of the Fiscal Year 2014 National Defense Authorization Act	76195
2016–04	Dec. 2	Presidential Determination: Suspension of Limitations Under the Jerusalem Embassy Act	77567

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